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**AMERICAN-EDUCATED CHINESE STUDENTS AND  
THEIR IMPACT ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in  
History from the College of William and Mary in Virginia,

by

Joshua A. Litten

Accepted for \_\_\_\_\_

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Williamsburg, Virginia  
May 2009

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1: The Forerunners.....	7
Yung Wing and the Chinese Educational Mission, 1847 – 1900	
Chapter 2: “Unofficial Envoys”.....	29
The Boxer Indemnity Scholarships, 1900 – 1949	
Chapter 3: The Lost Generation.....	55
Taiwan and the Mainland, 1949 – 1979	
Chapter 4: There and Back Again.....	68
Post-Normalization, 1979 – Present	
Conclusion.....	89
Bibliographical Essay.....	91
Bibliography.....	99

## **Introduction**

The history of American-educated Chinese students has paralleled the development of Sino-American relations almost from its inception upon the arrival of the trader ship *Empress of China* in Canton in 1784. However, currently no single study covers the entire history of that educational exchange. This is especially discouraging because Chinese students and educational exchange policies have influenced U.S.-China relations for more than one hundred and fifty years. The number of Chinese students and their experiences in the United States often serve as an important historical indicator of the status of diplomatic relations between the two nations at any given time. Chinese students exerted considerable political strength within either American or Chinese political spheres during certain periods – the broad national Chinese Students’ Alliance (1902-1931) organized by the second generation of Chinese students and the student lobbyist movement that developed in the wake of the Tiananmen Square protests and crackdown in 1989 are both important examples. Even where political influence and leverage is not an issue, the perception of Chinese as hard-working intellectuals has pervaded the American public. The number of Chinese students in the United States has steadily grown over time, increasing public exposure to those students.

The trend continues. Nearly 90,000 Chinese students and scholars studied in the United States during the 2006-2007 school year, a record high.<sup>1</sup> When the Institute of International Education (IIE), a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of international exchange programs, launched a series of reports on global education in 2008, they began with a volume on U.S.-China educational exchange. The report also indicates that a greater number of American students are now studying in China, and several articles also

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<sup>1</sup> Shepherd Laughlin, “Trends and Models of Academic Exchange Between China and the U.S.,” in *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: Perspectives on a Growing Partnership*, ed. Shepherd Laughlin (New York: AIFS Foundation and Institute of International Education: 2008), 4-5.

note a norm-defying shift in the focus of graduate research to China in recent years. In an article by reporter Ariana Eunjung Cha published on February 20, 2008, *The Washington Post* claimed that since the year 2000, over 275,000 scholars and scientists have returned to China to study and work.<sup>2</sup> As major shifts in the educational exchange dynamic begin to surface, a grasp of the effects of educational exchange on U.S.-China relations historically can be very enlightening.

This paper aims to construct a historical narrative tracing Chinese students in America over 160 years from Yung Wing – the first Chinese national to graduate from an American university (Yale, Class of 1854) – to the post-Tiananmen movement and current exchange trends and policies. Furthermore, this paper argues that Chinese students have heavily influenced Sino-American relations through active movements, passive perception creation, and policies upon returning home to China. The altering of racial and national perception in particular played an important part in the role of Chinese students in the United States. With only a few important exceptions, Chinese students were largely incapable of directly affecting diplomacy between the two nations while completing their studies. While their careers afterward certainly played a large role in defining U.S.-China relations and such careers are covered in this thesis, the importance of altering American perceptions of China and Chinese people as well as Chinese perceptions of America cannot be overemphasized.

Because of the broad span of time covered, the paper is divided into four chapters, each focusing on one “generation” of Chinese students and scholars in the United States. Each chapter discusses the movements and trends of a particular “generation” within the context of Chinese and American history and U.S.-China relations. Case studies within each

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<sup>2</sup> Ariana Eunjung Cha, “Opportunities in China Lure Scientists Home,” *The Washington Post*, February 20, 2008.

chapter aim to highlight some of the larger contributions to Sino-American relations and changes in Chinese study in America. Since time rarely allows itself to be conveniently squashed into mere periods of history, there is considerable overlap of students, returned students, and diplomats from chapter to chapter, but such overlap, in my view, serves to strengthen the connections provided by a comprehensive history of American-educated Chinese students.

Chapter One (1847-1900) provides background information about the first educational exchange movement within China, giving context to the first generation of visiting Chinese students. The main focus of the chapter is on Yung Wing and the students, policies and effects of the Chinese Educational Mission. Chapter Two (1900-1949) discusses the second generation of students, an extremely influential group whose origins can be traced back to the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships. These students formed the Chinese Students' Alliance, an association grown out of grassroots movements on college campuses which provided both support and opportunities for a forum of Chinese students abroad. They were extremely well organized both abroad and at home. The chapter also encompasses the Chinese Civil War between communist forces and the ruling Guomindang party, the disastrous consequences of which effectively ended the period of the second generation of American-educated Chinese students. Chapter Three (1949-1979) effectively shifts focus from mainland China to Taiwan, tracing the rocky relationship with both the People's Republic of China and the separate Nationalist government of the Republic of China on Taiwan during this time. The chapter's title, "The Lost Generation," refers to three separate groups. This includes students stranded in the United States, students caught up in devastating events in mainland China, and students in Taiwan who saw their importance

decline as a result of American President Richard Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 and the warming relations between the People's Republic and the United States following the Shanghai Communiqué drafted during that visit. Chapter Four (1979-2008) covers the explosive influx of Chinese students studying in the United States since normalization of relations in 1979. It also highlights the student lobbyist movement following the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989 and ends with a report on present trends in U.S.-China educational exchange, including the recent rise in numbers of scholars returning to China for graduate study and work. However, while the thesis ends in 2009, when over 275,000 Chinese exchange students are studying in the United States, it begins with one single pioneer in educational exchange, Yung Wing.

## **Chapter 1: The Forerunners**

### **Yung Wing and the Chinese Educational Mission, 1847-1900**

At age nineteen, Yung Wing and two other Chinese students made history as the first Chinese to study in the United States. Chaperoned by their teacher from a Hong Kong missionary school, the three students made waves in white American society first in New York and later in Connecticut where they attended the Monson Academy. One student quickly returned to China, while another left for medical training in Scotland. By 1849, only Yung Wing remained in the United States. Yung Wing struggled through financial troubles and challenging classes, but he became the first Chinese student to graduate from an American university when he received a degree from Yale in 1854. However, the Chinese government at the time did not recognize Yung Wing's achievement or attempt to follow in his footsteps for nearly twenty years.

After all, the idea of Chinese studying in America did not originate with conservative Chinese bureaucrats. Yung Wing's path to America began with the work of Dr. Robert Morrison, a British citizen and member of the London Missionary Society,<sup>3</sup> and the first Protestant missionary to China in 1807. Morrison and the missionaries who followed him settled in and around Guangzhou during the early 1800s, traveling to the Middle Kingdom with the intent of Christianizing and educating the Chinese. Protestant missionaries overcame not only the obstacles posed by the local Chinese administrators but also the jealousy of the already established Catholic missionaries in Macao and western Guangdong. Dr. Morrison met these challenges and served as an example for the missionary community. His work in translation led to the first accurate Chinese translation of the Bible, spearheaded by Morrison

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<sup>3</sup> The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795 in London as The Missionary Society with the intent to send Protestant evangelicals abroad. The society's first missions, which were to Tahiti, were disastrous; a return ship was captured by French privateers. However, the society quickly recovered and subsequently sponsored Morrison's mission to China.



with help from three other Protestant missionaries. This same translation was later used by the self-proclaimed Christian Taiping rebels.<sup>4</sup>

Morrison's precedent-setting missionary school for Chinese people was not built and operated in China but in the British colony of Malacca in present-day Malaysia. After much persecution in China, Morrison managed to garner approval from the London Missionary Society to establish a seminary to train Malacca's small Chinese population in Christian catechism. The pattern Morrison and his colleague, Mr. William Milne, established ensured that the children first "received the ordinary elements of Chinese education. By-and-by the Catechism prepared by Mr. Morrison was introduced, and the children were familiarized with the leading words of religious character...."<sup>5</sup> This school became a model for the educational system Morrison spent his later years advocating in Guangzhou. For Morrison, as for most early missionaries, educating the Chinese meant teaching them English and Christian values with the purpose of making evangelicals out of local converts.

When Morrison died on August 1, 1834, the foreign missionary community in China felt a deep loss. On January 26, 1835, a notice was passed around the foreign community in Guangdong, recommending the formation of an association designed to "improve and promote English education in China by schools and other means" as a fitting memorial to Morrison and his mission.<sup>6</sup> Set up with the Morrison-Milne model in mind, the school did not last long due to limited funding from an overstretched missionary community, but it did

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<sup>4</sup> W.J. Townsend, *Robert Morrison: The Pioneer of Chinese Missions* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1888), 41, 102. The Taiping Rebels were rebellious forces mostly from Southern China influenced by Christian ideas and led by Hong Xiuquan, a failed scholar who manipulated anti-Manchu sentiment in the 1850s and proclaimed himself to be the brother of Jesus. Paradoxically, the society borrowed ideas from Puritanism while leaders indulged in polygamy and fought for power – leading to the downfall in 1864 of the Kingdom of Heavenly Peace they had erected in Nanjing.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend, 84-85.

<sup>6</sup> Yung, 14.

eventually launch the career of the first Chinese student ever to graduate from an American university: Yung Wing.

Yung Wing was born the third of four children on November 17, 1828 in Nam Ping, a village just southwest of Macao on Pedro Island.<sup>7</sup> His parents were farmers, but their proximity to the foreign trade teeming in Macao, occupied by the Portuguese since traders set up a settlement in 1557, numbed them to the shock and vexation foreigners often caused other Chinese. In 1835, Mrs. Mary Gützlaff, spouse of the Lutheran missionary Reverend Charles (Karl) Gützlaff, formed a local missionary school.<sup>8</sup> Originally a girl's school, it soon accepted a limited number of boys as well, pending the opening of the Morrison School in 1839. Yung Wing's parents heard about the school through a family connection employed by the Gützlaff school. Though Yung Wing himself questioned his parents' decision to enroll him in the school, their reasoning appears to have been very progressive. With his eldest brother already on the institutionalized Confucian path to the professional bureaucracy, Yung Wing was of more use to his family's *guanxi*, a Chinese term roughly meaning relations network (through personal contacts), by studying English and creating connections with the burgeoning foreign community.

Mrs. Gützlaff – as Yung Wing always referred to her in his memoirs – was English, unlike her German husband, and at age seven perhaps the first white woman Yung Wing had ever met. The missionary's wife separated Yung Wing from the other boys and trained him alongside her female students and two nieces. Yung Wing's grooming was almost for naught when, in 1840, his father unexpectedly died. Both Yung Wing and his elder brother were

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<sup>7</sup> Yung, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Old Foh-kien, *Obituary Rev. Charles Gutzlaff. D.D. from the Gentleman's Magazine, Sylvanus Urban, 1851*, [http://www.fohkien.cn/gtutzlaff\\_obit\\_.htm](http://www.fohkien.cn/gtutzlaff_obit_.htm). Accessed on December 3, 2008.

recalled from their studies in order to support the family through odd jobs such as fishing, harvesting, and apprentice printing. It was completely by chance that Dr. Benjamin Hobson, a medical missionary and friend of the Gützlaff family, found Yung Wing at the printer's shop less than a mile from the doctor's makeshift hospital.<sup>9</sup>

Hobson had promised Mary Gützlaff that he would enroll Yung Wing in the Morrison School once it was properly established. Founded on November 1, 1839, the school was placed under the care of an American missionary and graduate of Yale College, Reverend Samuel Robbins Brown.<sup>10</sup> Yung Wing was enrolled by 1841; he spent five years with young men slightly his elder but his peers in educational progress. His love was so great for the school which prepared him for America that years later he named one of his two sons after the institution and its namesake. Though Brown's class originally consisted of five young men, the size grew to the point where another teacher was required. On March 12, 1845, the school hired missionary William Allen Macy as an assistant teacher. Also a Yale graduate, Macy confirmed the wide-reaching influence of Yale College upon his Chinese students. In 1846, the ultimate goal of the Morrison School and Reverend Brown was revealed: Brown wished to bring a few of his oldest and most talented students back with him to America. His health had taken a turn for the worse and with his own return imminent, he had made arrangements for sponsors to cover the travel cost of students leaving with him. When he made this startling offer to his students four months before his departure, only three students stood to accept. The first on his feet was Yung Wing.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Yung, 7-13.

<sup>10</sup> LaFargue, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Yung, 13-19.

Yung Wing was joined by two other Morrison school students, Wong Foon and Wong Hsing, in securing free passage on the Olyphant Brothers'<sup>12</sup> ship, the *Huntress*. Together with Reverend Brown, they left the harbor at Whampoa on January 4, 1847, and arrived in New York on April 12. Brown brought the young men around to see various members of the missionary community; they caused quite a stir one morning when the three of them sat together in Reverend Shubael Bartlett's church in New Haven.<sup>13</sup> For many in the area, they were the first Chinese that white Americans in New Haven had ever met.

Special interest was shown in the three Chinese boys wherever they went; they were seen as hope for further Christianizing the Chinese by example. Reverend Charles Hammond, principal of the Monson Academy and another Yale graduate, lavished attention on them for "the possible good that might come out of their education."<sup>14</sup> Most of their time at Monson Academy, a preparatory school for Yale, was spent in the English department, but their studies also included Physiology, Philosophy and Math. In the meantime, Yung Wing formed a bond with the local community, setting up the network he would call on in years to come.

At the outset, the plan for the boys' education ended in 1849. Wong Hsing, the oldest boy, returned to China in the fall of 1848 for health reasons. After his departure, Wong Foon and Yung Wing agreed to stay in the United States after 1849 and continue their studies. However, their original funds dried up by the end of the 1849 school year. Andrew Shortrede, an entrepreneur, patriotic Scotsman, and one of the missionary community

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<sup>12</sup> Originally known as Olyphant, Talbot, & Co., Olyphant and Company was one of four major American trading companies after the 1830s. D.W.C. Olyphant, the founder of the company, was an evangelical Protestant and affiliated his company heavily with the missionaries in China, refusing to carry opium and often transporting missionaries free of charge aboard his ships.

<sup>13</sup> Yung, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Yung, 28.

backers in Canton, offered to continue paying their educational fees if they agreed to study medicine at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.<sup>15</sup> Wong accepted the offer, but Yung Wing had his heart set on Yale. His teachers suggested he apply for the indigent fund at Yale, but Yung decided against it because it conditioned a path into the ministry. He “wanted the utmost freedom of action to avail [himself] of every opportunity to do the greatest good in China.”<sup>16</sup> His mentors supported his decision, and Rev. Brown took steps to acquire other funds for Yung Wing. Brown encouraged a southern women’s missionary society, The Ladies Association of Savannah, Georgia, and the Olyphant Brothers to regularly send Yung money, and Yung Wing earned the rest through jobs as a boarding club student manager and eventually an assistant librarian.<sup>17</sup> Though not academically well prepared for college, Yung Wing had caught the attention of many individuals inside the missionary and academic communities as an unusually bright and determined young man.

By his own admission Yung Wing was ill-prepared for the rigors of Yale, yet the community seemed to carry him on their shoulders through his four years at the college. His math scores in particular put him in danger of failing, but Yung Wing cryptically said, “but for some unexplained reasons I was saved from such a catastrophe, and I squeezed through the second year with so low a mark that I was afraid to ask my division tutor...about it.”<sup>18</sup> While no evidence exists and Yung Wing may have been exaggerating the dismal state of his studies, his professors and friends had helped him when in financial crisis before. It is not unlikely they lobbied for his grades at least in this instance as well. His assistant librarianship

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<sup>15</sup> LaFargue, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Yung, 35.

<sup>17</sup> LaFargue, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Yung, 38.

for “Brothers in Unity,” one of the college’s debating societies, acquainted him with many in the community, and according to Yung Wing, “my nationality, of course, added piquancy to my popularity.”<sup>19</sup> Yung Wing graduated in 1854. Despite his having become a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1852, his thoughts about what to do beyond graduation lay solely with the improvement of China.<sup>20</sup>

Yung Wing did not immediately change or improve Sino-American relations in any meaningful way. Although he established a precedent for future generations, he was more a product of missionary efforts than a concerted exchange between China and the United States. With the Morrison School’s closing in 1850, the community in Canton no longer had the money or influence to repeat the “Yung Wing” experiment.<sup>21</sup> However, Yung’s experiences did encourage him to open an education exchange between the two nations with a view to westernizing young Chinese students. Direct personal exposure, in Yung Wing’s mind, would better equip the students to deal with the influx of western technology China would need to advance from a feudal state. Upon returning to China in 1854, however, he found little support for such an effort. The Taiping Rebellion – a civil war waged from 1850 to 1864 between pseudo-Christian discontents and the official Qing army – raged on, European foreign powers circled hungrily, and the Qing Dynasty stood upon the brink of dissolution. Yung Wing made a small fortune in the tea trade during the war, by shipping tea from Taiping-controlled regions and delivering it to imperial China.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Yung, 40.

<sup>20</sup> LaFargue, 22.

<sup>21</sup> Yung, 17.

<sup>22</sup> LaFargue, 22-24.

The Taiping Rebellion inadvertently created the necessary conditions for the exchange and westernization of which Yung Wing dreamed. As the war continued, the imperial court handed off more and more power to regional commanders and later viceroys like Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang.<sup>23</sup> Zeng Guofan in particular was an avid advocate of westernization, leading the so-called “self-strengthening” movement<sup>24</sup> which sought to combine western technology with Chinese values during the 1860s. In 1863, as the war wound down, Zeng began looking to the future and, more importantly, to the West. Zeng heard through the mathematician Li Renshu of a Chinese man who had graduated from Yale and continued his correspondence with Americans. Needing someone whose Western expertise was unquestioned, Zeng summoned Yung Wing to Anjing for a meeting; shortly afterward Yung was sent to America to negotiate the purchase of machinery for an arsenal and factory in China. He also recommended Yung Wing for official governmental rank.<sup>25</sup> As Yung Wing’s patron Zeng’s wealth and power grew over the course of the decade, so did the respect officials newly paid to Yung Wing, a man they had previously judged as more foreign than Chinese.

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<sup>23</sup> Zeng Guofan was a Han Chinese military leader, administrator, and scholar with ties to Eastern China who led military campaigns against rebellious forces during the mid-nineteenth century. Li Hongzhang was another high ranking scholar-official and military leader who acquired even more prestige through military campaigns against rebels; he also attained the highest level of scholarship, the *jinshi* degree, and later served as China’s most valuable statesmen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, negotiating several treaties for China.

<sup>24</sup> The “self-strengthening” movement (1861-1895) began during the later years of the Taiping Rebellion and lasted until the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) when Chinese forces, specifically the navy, were crushed by the Japanese. The reforms included heavy interest in Western-style modernization of the military – led by Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang – as well as deeper relations with the Western powers as evidenced by the establishment of the Zongli Yamen, the Office of Foreign Affairs. The movement ultimately failed due to wavering commitment and cool appraisals by conservative court officials as well as foreign encroachments and wars.

<sup>25</sup> LaFargue, 26.

By the late 1860s, some Chinese leaders were ready to pursue educational opportunities abroad. Anson Burlingame,<sup>26</sup> an American minister to China turned envoy extraordinary for the Chinese government, negotiated a treaty with Secretary of State William Seward in 1868 that promised the United States would allow Chinese students into any U.S. government school, including military academies. In 1870, Yung Wing was called back into service as an interpreter for commissioners dealing with the French in the aftermath of the Tianjin Massacre, in which rumors of infanticide stirred Chinese citizens to kill several French priests and nuns.<sup>27</sup> During this assignment, Yung Wing impressed Zeng, Li, and other high-ranking commissioners with his plan to educate Chinese in the United States – so much so that they sent a memorial to the emperor suggesting such a course of action. Because they believed America’s advances in technology more practical to the education of Chinese students than Europe’s more liberal arts, the imperial court agreed with the commissioners’ plan to create the Chinese Educational Mission. They decided to send thirty students to the United States each year for four years with the understanding that each would return by 1887 to serve China with their newfound western knowledge.<sup>28</sup> The imperial court allotted the equivalent of a million and a half U.S. dollars in the 1870s for the project.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Anson Burlingame was an American politician and statesman from Massachusetts. Originally a congressman, he was later appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as minister to China in 1861. While there, he was perceived as especially sympathetic by the Chinese. In 1867 near the time of his retirement, he was picked by the Qing government to negotiate with foreign powers on its behalf, leading to the Burlingame Treaty in 1868. The Burlingame Treaty (1868) had several provisions. It recognized China’s right of eminent domain, allowed Chinese consuls at U.S. ports, called for religious tolerance for United States citizens in China, and granted other select privileges – except the right of naturalization.

<sup>27</sup> In 1870, rumors of kidnappings circulated through Tianjin. At the same time, French Catholic nuns were known to rescue orphans. Tensions ran high. When the French consul forced his way into the magistrate’s yamen to put an end to the misconceptions, a mob gathered and the consul ordered his men to fire into it. The consul and his advisor were killed, and nearly sixty foreigners and Christian converts were murdered in the resultant riots. In response, the French government sent gunboats to the city to demand reprisals. Sixteen Chinese of dubious connection to the massacre were executed, and a formal apology mission was sent to France in 1871.



By this point, Yung Wing's original patron Zeng Guofan had fallen out of favor.<sup>30</sup> Li Hongzhang, one of the other commissioners who sent the memorial and a protégé of Zeng, gained in influence in his place, and it was Li's political stature that helped curry favor for the mission in the court. Another fateful step was the appointment of Chen Lanbin as co-commissioner to win over conservatives in the court who felt Yung Wing held too many foreign beliefs. This decision would eventually lead to the mission's demise. Another attempt to assuage jumpy conservatives in the court was Li's decision to send Confucian teachers to America with the student groups to ensure traditional Chinese learning was not completely forsaken for western ways. Preparation for the journey, including rudimentary English training, was to begin in a school in Shanghai with the best thirty students sent off to America each year.

In the beginning the newly created Chinese Educational Mission (C.E.M.) had other hurdles to cross. Though families from the southern and coastal provinces relatively familiar with foreigners responded to the invitation to send their sons for western training, northern and inland provinces sent almost no one. This forced Yung Wing to swiftly tour Guangdong, his home province, and especially in and around Canton to enlist family friends and old classmates from the Morrison School to send their sons on the mission. Over 70% of the 120 boys were from the Canton area, while 37% came from Yung Wing's home district of Hsiang

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<sup>28</sup> Stacey Bieler, *"Patriots" Or "traitors"?: A History of American Educated Chinese Students* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> *The New York Times*, "THE CHINESE EDUCATIONAL MISSION," August 18, 1873, 5, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>30</sup> Zeng Guofan fell out of favor in his later years due to two reasons. He failed to perform adequately in suppressing the Nian Rebellion in southern China after 1864, and he was relieved of his command by his protégé, Li Hongzhang. Li Hongzhang then succeeded him as viceroy of Zhili in 1870 when Zeng took a diplomatic stance during the Tianjin Massacre negotiations – contrary to the will of the imperial court. He died in 1872.

Shan.<sup>31</sup> Inevitably, this lack of diversity gave Americans a lopsided view of China. The coolies, Chinese manual laborers in the United States, largely came from the southern and coastal provinces as well, so despite a lack of exposure to northern Chinese culture – which included the imperial Manchu court – the dichotomy of southern academics gave a pleasant contrast to the coolies Americans often viewed as little better than slaves.

Yung Wing then left for America before either the first batch of students or co-commissioner Chen Lanbin. Under the advice of the new Yale President, Noah Porter III, Yung Wing arranged for accommodations with several American households among which to scatter the students with the aim of forcing those students to learn English more quickly. The mission so excited the people of the Connecticut Valley that once the students arrived more than enough host families had signed up to take them in. This strategy worked perhaps too well for the mission. While the majority of students speedily made American friends, received high marks, and adapted to New England discipline, it also became more and more difficult to interest the boys in their Confucian studies as they rapidly became Americanized.<sup>32</sup>

Accounts of the students' individual experiences in America are slim, mostly coming secondhand from Chinese reports and American diaries and letters. The boys often felt out of place upon their arrival. For example, Yen Fu-Lee's cousin encouraged his mother to volunteer Yen for the mission after hearing through the tea trade of Yung Wing and the new movement. Yen's account of his arrival includes his first embarrassing encounter with his host mother, who hugged and kissed him – his first kisses since infancy.<sup>33</sup> Despite initial

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<sup>31</sup> LaFargue, 32-34.

<sup>32</sup> LaFargue, 35.

awkwardness, most boys warmed to their new families quickly. Huang Kaijia, a “chubby” young man whose ability to make speeches earned him the nickname “Breezy Jack,” lived with the particularly strict Bartlett family. His closeness to the family remained such that he continued correspondence with Mrs. Bartlett, whom he referred to as his “American mother,” long after the mission was recalled.<sup>34</sup> Huang Kaijia entered Yale in 1879, only two years before the project was abandoned. His nickname “Breezy Jack” is only one example of numerous American aliases the boys developed over the course of nine years, and these names not only stuck for use by American friends but by each other as well.

Yung Kwai, nephew of the famous Yung Wing, was fourteen when he first stepped onto American soil as part of the second detachment of Chinese students in 1873. Like many of his classmates, he quickly grew accustomed to American life – much to the discomfort of his Confucian teachers in the mission. While adoption of western mannerisms and practices merely frustrated the older conservatives, Yung Kwai’s conversion to Christianity in 1880 and the subsequent cutting off of his queue – the symbol of fealty to the Qing emperor – infuriated them. After wrathful reports back home, the bureaucracy ordered Yung Kwai’s return to China and discontinued funds for his education. His uncle intervened, however, and with help from an American minister and pastor of the local Congregational church, Reverend J.H. Twichell, Yung Wing paid for the boy’s college expenses at what was then Yale College under one condition: Yung Kwai would have to use his education for the good of China by joining its diplomatic corps after graduation.<sup>35</sup> Though now a Christian convert

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<sup>33</sup> LaFargue, 38-39.

<sup>34</sup> Bieler, 6, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas E. LaFargue, *China's First Hundred: Educational Mission Students in the United States, 1872-1881* (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1942), 45-46, 140, 174.

in violation of Chinese law by removing his queue, Yung Kwai happily obliged to return to his country's service after attending Yale.

Americans and especially locals in Connecticut were thrilled by the Chinese Educational Mission. The overwhelming response to Yung Wing's requests for support displays just how widespread was the eagerness of Americans to impart western wisdom to the largely un-Christianized Chinese masses. In the grip of Manifest Destiny<sup>36</sup>, the American expansionist ideal made popular by Democratic journalist John L. O'Sullivan espousing the innate superiority of the United States, Americans felt a special paternalism for the eastern nations. For Americans, the C.E.M. was a primary example of the Chinese people growing up under the guiding hand of the United States. A *New York Times* article in 1873 claimed Zeng Guofan's death the previous year was especially significant given the inauguration of the mission, for he had managed to overcome conservatism. In fact, it suggested his legacy both at home and abroad would eventually come to be known primarily as a proponent of the Chinese Educational Mission. The hyperbole does not end there. To close the article, the editors drew on the local *Hartford Post* in saying:

To this...should be added the statement that the efforts of Kwoh Fan (*sic*), Hoong Chang and Jeh Ghang, were due to the increasing labors of Yung Wing, now of Hartford, who was a graduate of Yale College, and went back to China filled with the one purpose of securing the education of Chinese youth by having them sent to this country.<sup>37</sup>

Hartford claimed Yung Wing as their own, and both the community and the country were quick to wrap the swiftly Americanizing students in a paternal embrace as well.

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<sup>36</sup> Manifest Destiny was the widespread belief in the United States that it was America's destiny to expand westward, spreading Christianity and American values. Originally made popular by a journalist in the early 1800s, it served as the rationale for both continental expansion and overseas conflict in Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines.

<sup>37</sup> *The New York Times*, "THE CHINESE EDUCATIONAL MISSION," August 18, 1873, 5, <http://www.proquest.com>.

Americanization concerned the Confucian tutors and especially Chen Lanbin, who felt extremely uncomfortable in this unfamiliar land. He was horrified that the boys quickly traded in their long silk gowns, emblems of the traditional Chinese scholar, for American trousers after some bullying and a few playground fights.<sup>38</sup> After 1874, a permanent headquarters was built in Hartford that also served as a temporary residence for the students during the Confucian teaching sessions which took place there. Chen was recalled that same year, only to be named Chief Minister to the United States with Yung Wing as his associate a year later. Chen strongly disliked the United States, however, and waited until 1878 to return. When he did, he brought with him a new, even more conservative commissioner for the C.E.M., Wu Zideng. Chen Lanbin's time home in China was not without effect; he had disparaged the mission in political circles, and Wu's reports on bad management and poor Confucian manners on the part of the students only confirmed the suspicions of the powerful anti-foreign cadre in the court. Yung Wing's marriage to a white woman, Mary Louise Kellogg, in 1875 also triggered the racial prejudices of conservative courtiers. American historian Thomas LaFargue speculates that as prejudice toward Chinese labor immigrants in California and other parts of the U.S. grew and the mission garnered more enemies, Li Hongzhang himself may have sent Wu to sabotage the mission.<sup>39</sup>

Yung's ministerial duties often pulled him away from the mission after 1875, and so he could do little to moderate the damage Wu Zideng was doing to the mission's reputation. The final straw came when Li Hongzhang discovered that Chinese students would not be allowed into American military academies without a special act of Congress, despite the privileges specifically laid out in the Burlingame Treaty. Li, always in tune with politics,

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<sup>38</sup> LaFargue, 38.

<sup>39</sup> LaFargue, 44.

could no longer champion the mission. As things looked grim, President Porter of Yale started a petition which, among other things, enumerated the successes of the students in their studies and in their roles as unofficial ambassadors to the United States. The petition was signed by Laureus Seelye, President of Smith College; Reverend Twichell who had only recently married Yung Wing to Mary Kellogg; and Mark Twain, Twichell's personal friend. Twain's influence reached as far as former President Ulysses S. Grant (in office 1869-1877). Grant had formerly used the last stop of his world tour in 1879 to plead to Li Hongzhang that the students in the C.E.M. should be allowed to complete their studies. In answer to Li's complaints about the military academies, Grant suggested that the students could gain field experience in the American navy. At Twain's insistence, Grant sent another letter in 1880 urging Li to reconsider his decision, calling it a "mistake."<sup>40</sup> However, by March of 1881, Li had washed his hands of the mission, and on June 8, 1881, the government abolished the project and ordered its participants to return home.

The Chinese Educational Mission's recall is interwoven with the story of the Chinese Exclusion Act's passage.<sup>41</sup> Largely concerned with limiting the high influx of manual labor from China to California, Western politicians had clamored for such a bill for years. The Fifteen Passenger Bill of 1879, which would have limited Chinese to 15 passengers per ship to the United States and made Pacific transport uneconomical, passed both houses before meeting President Rutherford Hayes' veto. Hayes (in office 1877-1881) insisted he could not sign a bill that violated the immigration agreements in the 1868 Burlingame Treaty. In response to this failure, Congress modified the Burlingame Treaty in 1880, through a new agreement, the Angell Treaty, to allow limitations on Chinese immigration. Immediately a

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<sup>40</sup> Bieler, 9.

<sup>41</sup> This Act is explained further on pages 22 and 23.

bill was introduced and passed soon after suspending Chinese immigration for twenty years, but President Chester Arthur vetoed it, essentially claiming it went too far.<sup>42</sup> Two years later, Congress finally managed to place definite limits on Chinese immigration. The Chinese Exclusion Act passed on May 6, 1882 set an ugly precedent: it was the first law targeting one specific nationality or race for exclusion from immigration.

What changed in U.S.-China Relations during those two years? In 1881 the Chinese Educational Mission was recalled, and many constituents' only positive connection with China had been removed by what many viewed as close-minded conservatives in charge of the Chinese government. Historian Andrew Gyory adds credence to this theory of political expediency. He claims that rather than a solely Californian issue led by Dennis Kearney, populist rabble-rouser and founder of the xenophobic blue-collar Workingman's Party of California opposed to indentured coolie labor from China, or evidence of national racism, the bill on Chinese immigration was the product of several politicians' attempts at politicking at a time when the intensely pro-labor Democratic Party was on the rise. Western and Northern congressmen alike couched their arguments in terms of the working man, while Southern politicians raised the specter of another civil war due to the Chinese race invasion.<sup>43</sup> In no recorded political speech was the Chinese Educational Mission discussed as a shining example of American influence on Chinese immigrants because its removal, more than anything else, allowed the political backlash against the entire Chinese "race," who, with the exception of the C.E.M. students, were largely portrayed in the media as inferior heathens and listless coolie laborers.

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<sup>42</sup> Kitty Calavita, "The Paradoxes of Race, Class, Identity, and "Passing": Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882-1910," *Law & Social Inquiry* 25, no. 1 (Winter, 2000): 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 6.

Zheng Caoru, the new Chinese minister to the United States replacing Chen Lanbin, denounced the Chinese Exclusion Act soundly, but his predecessor had so frustrated Washington's politicians that his voice carried no weight.<sup>44</sup> The American Northeast was largely baffled by the successive acts of the recall and the exclusion act. A professor in Hoboken who saw his student returned to China commented that "there is no unfriendly spirit here" against the Chinese students so rudely removed.<sup>45</sup> Yung Wing was abroad during the passage of the Exclusion Act, trying to rally support to re-establish the mission in the United States, or at the very least to secure decent jobs for his former students. Both quests failed in the face of the sudden rage over the Exclusion Act. Yung Wing returned to the U.S. in 1883 to find his wife very ill. Her death in 1886, so shortly after the utter collapse of Yung's dream of westernizing China, was "enough to crush [his] spirit."<sup>46</sup>

Despite the general rancor in official channels, the students departed amiably. Though missed by their host families and leaving behind Yung Wing, a distraught commissioner, the students appeared to bear no ill will toward either China or the United States. They assumed naturally that bureaucratic jobs awaited them back in China, and based on the overwhelming support of the Connecticut Valley, they also assumed the entirety of the U.S. would have preferred that their studies continued. Not even the prejudice of the West dampened their spirits as they prepared to embark from San Francisco. Instead, the students participated in a friendly game of baseball with an Oakland team. The unorthodox pitches of future diplomat Liang Tunyen effectively won the game and sent the Chinese students back to China

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<sup>44</sup> Gyory, 243.

<sup>45</sup> *The Washington Post*, "The Chinese Students: Effect of the Recent Order from the Celestial Empire," July 29, 1881, 1, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>46</sup> Yung, 223.



smiling.<sup>47</sup> As previously mentioned, some students even opted to stay in the United States through official favors: Yung Kwai, for example, eventually took up the post of interpreter and diplomat for the Chinese legation in Washington, D.C. His classmate Tan Yew-fun also converted to Christianity and graduated from Yale in 1883, but died only a scant few weeks later.<sup>48</sup>

The Americanized students had no idea just how little respect their stature commanded on their return to China. When Tong Wing Ho was asked by an American reporter why the students returned to China in American dress, he responded that it was in courtesy to the land of their education and that "...placing it as a matter of convenience I would rather assume the Oriental style. We have a brilliant prospect before us and can not afford to risk anything by offending public taste."<sup>49</sup> Given Tong's statement to the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1881, the students' return to China was ignominious at best. Their dress did offend the conservative officials, and their welcome showed it. Forced to carry their own bags like peasants, they were rounded up into what Huang Kaijia later described to Mrs. Bartlett as a building akin to a "Turkish Prison" in order to be effectively debriefed. China saw them as "denationalized beings."<sup>50</sup> With the Chinese Exclusion Act enacted in 1882, their fall from grace only grew longer and more depressing; most were forced to start their careers at the bottom of the Chinese bureaucracy often as little better than minor undersecretaries.

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<sup>47</sup> LaFargue, 53.

<sup>48</sup> LaFargue, 46.

<sup>49</sup> *The Washington Post*, "The Chinese Students Again: Why the Celestial Government Desires Them at Home," August 24, 1881, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>50</sup> Bieler, 11-12.

A select few fought to return to the United States where, despite general prejudice, the former students did not feel like pariahs compared to the situation in their home country. In 1883, Jang Ting-Seong stowed away on a ship bound for Korea, believing it was headed for Indonesia where he planned to find another ship to take him to the United States. Luckily, one of the passengers on board was Tang Shaoyi, a former classmate of Jang's in the C.E.M. now enlisted in the government bureaucracy. Tang took pity on Jang and arranged his passage to America, where he became a consulting engineer and a designer and builder of the Brooklyn Bridge. Yen Fu-Lee also remained in the United States with little connection to his homeland. He wrote the popular children's book "When I was a Boy in China" and edited several American magazines.<sup>51</sup>

The vast majority of C.E.M. students felt an obligation to their country despite their initial harsh treatment upon their recall. One of the assistant commissioners at the close of the mission stated that the reason for the students' withdrawal was not fear of Americanization but eagerness to put their knowledge to use in the nation's new telegraph lines.<sup>52</sup> Liang Tunyen, a former boarder of the Bartlett family in Hartford, gained special recognition after being employed as an English teacher for the Telegraph College in Tianjin in 1881. His reputation grew, and in 1884 Li Hongzhang's political rival Zhang Zhidong, a staunch supporter of modernization and reform, appointed Liang his secretary. Liang was unique among the students for the broadness of his success. Less successful but equally notable was Huang Kaijia, still known to his friends as "Breezy Jack." Huang Kaijia worked as a secretary for several industrial projects and later for multiple princely envoys and diplomatic

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<sup>51</sup> LaFargue, 142.

<sup>52</sup> *The New York Times*, "Why the Chinese Students Go," August 22, 1881, 5, <http://www.proquest.com>.

missions. He died while returning from the Portsmouth [New Hampshire] Peace Conference that ended the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.<sup>53</sup>

Many students joined the fledgling Chinese navy, following the wishes of viceroy Li Hongzhang. Their efforts were not enough to correct the flaws in ship design owing to rushed construction, but their administration and command were excellent. Six of the vessels at the Battle of Pagoda Anchorage in the Sino-French War (1884-85)<sup>54</sup> were commanded by former students of the C.E.M. Though four of the six commanders lost their lives in the process, the American Minister to China used the naval officers' bravery to encourage sending more Chinese to the United States for their education. After all, the Chinese Exclusion Act forbade only labor immigration, not students visiting the U.S. for temporary study.

Many of the students found work in diplomatic circles as the reactionary conservatism that had taken hold in the later 1870s slowly dissipated. Tang Shaoyi, whose uncle had been a classmate of Yung Wing's at the Morrison School, is perhaps the best example of a rise in the domestic influence of the Chinese Educational Mission students. Upon returning to China, he was selected as a rising political star and appointed as Yuan Shikai's<sup>55</sup> personal secretary. In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion<sup>56</sup>, Tang served as an

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<sup>53</sup> LaFargue, 90-91.

<sup>54</sup> The Sino-French war was fought over the control of northern Vietnam, where China supported the anti-European Black Flags group in resistance to French control. It was the first real test of the "self-strengthening" movement. The Chinese navy was summarily defeated. However, officers were praised for their tenacity if not their technical skill. The lack of professionalism amongst the lower ranks also led to the defeat. See footnote 24 on page 14 for more information on the movement.

<sup>55</sup> Yuan Shikai first entered the Chinese political scene as a general in Korea during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), in the 1880s as Li Hongzhang's (and China's) principal representative in Korea. He later consolidated military power in northern China and forged a political alliance with Empress Dowager Cixi in 1899, thereby making himself an enemy of the reform-minded Guangxu Emperor.

<sup>56</sup> The Boxer Rebellion was originally an attack by an independent organization of xenophobic martial arts devotees on foreigners in China and the Qing government the people believed coddled the foreigners. However, the Empress Dowager Cixi threw her support behind the insurrection and the conflict ended in a siege on the

intermediary between the domestic and foreign forces in Tianjin. After stints as Vice-President of Foreign Affairs, Vice-Minister of Communications, and Governor General of Manchuria, Tang Shaoyi eventually capped his career off as the first Prime Minister of the Chinese Republic in 1912.<sup>57</sup>

1908 saw the deaths of the expertly manipulative and longtime conservative Empress Dowager Cixi and her nephew, the Guangxu Emperor; the Empress Dowager Cixi in particular had long foiled the efforts of Chinese progressives. This paved the way for Liang Tunyen's attempt to revive the process of sponsoring Chinese students abroad. When scholar-official and reformer Zhang Zhidong took over the responsibilities of Yuan Shikai (who had been relieved of his duties following the death of his political ally Empress Dowager Cixi) in 1908, he appointed Liang Tunyen as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Working with his old classmate Tang Shaoyi, the two negotiated a deal which led to the return of the Boxer Indemnities<sup>58</sup> in the form of scholarships for Chinese students to attend American colleges.<sup>59</sup> Liang Tunyen founded Tsinghua University in 1911 for students to attend in preparation for studies abroad.<sup>60</sup> Today Tsinghua University is not only one of the top colleges in China, but it is also internationally ranked. A list of its alumni includes numerous

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foreign quarter in Beijing. Eight nations sent troops to quell the rebellion: Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The siege was quashed and Beijing occupied. The eight powers – along with Belgium, Spain, and the Netherlands – forced China to sign the Boxer Protocol in 1901 which included a five-year suspension of China's traditional civil service examination system, the execution of several complicit Chinese military officers, and war reparations up to \$333 million U.S. dollars total, to be distributed amongst the nations.

<sup>57</sup> LaFargue, 117-19.

<sup>58</sup> The Boxer Indemnities were the war reparations of the Boxer Protocol. The reparations totaled over \$24 million for the U.S. alone.

<sup>59</sup> The details of this arrangement are discussed further in the next chapter.

<sup>60</sup> LaFargue, 125.

important Chinese politicians and diplomats, including the current President and Party Secretary Hu Jintao.

Liang and Tang's negotiation of the Boxer Indemnity scholarships became a turning point in Sino-American relations and the history of Chinese students abroad. Once again China sent its students to the United States in droves for technological and philosophical training, hoping to imbue its youth with the magic the West seemed to possess. Ignorant of or apathetic about the United States' paternalistic viewpoint on Chinese students in America, China wasted no time or effort in taking advantage of the scholarships. In 1909, Yung Wing's nephew, Yung Kwai, met the first group of indemnity students in Washington D.C.<sup>61</sup> He traveled with them to Springfield, Massachusetts where he had attended high school, effectively passing the torch from the first generation to the second. His uncle Yung Wing, whose spirit had been so crushed after 1886, was revived again and began writing his autobiography. He died on May 29, 1912, no longer a broken man.

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<sup>61</sup> Bieler, 99.

## **Chapter 2: “Unofficial Envoys”**

### **The Boxer Indemnity Scholarships, 1900-1949**

American educated Chinese will be a huge bridge across the Pacific Ocean between America and China, over which American civilization travels. They will be a marvelous means of transporting American ideas to and distributing them through the vast kingdom. They will be able to insure a peace and trade in the Far East that treaties and military forces can not insure. In one word, these students will be the most natural medium and most effective instruments through and with which American civilization, or rather American university education, can exert its wonderful influence on the new China.<sup>62</sup>

- T.Y. Chang, 1907 Alumnus of the University of California

They had no official diplomatic status, but American-educated Chinese of the second generation emerged as the great hope of a new China. Between 1900 and 1949, China experienced perhaps the most turbulent years in its political history. The Middle Kingdom shifted from a long-practiced system of dynastic rule to republicanism, with warlordism, outside aggression, and civil war tossed into the mix. China began the century in the midst of a rebellion that drew the ire of western civilization down upon the Qing Empire; by the century's midpoint it was a war-weary nation subject to the unique communist ideology of Mao Zedong.<sup>63</sup> In the middle of such a tumultuous history, some Chinese students scrambled to western and particularly American universities in hopes of returning with the keys to Chinese modernization. In awe of republicanism, American virtues, and western technology, these students strived in the face of crisis at home to convince the United States of China's

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<sup>62</sup> Walter J. Ballard, "Chinese Students in America," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1909, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>63</sup> Mao Zedong was born in Hunan province on December 26, 1893. As a library assistant to communist thinker and librarian Li Dazhao at Beijing University, Mao attended some classes taught by Chinese intellectuals Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi. He also read extensively, learning about Karl Marx's Communist theories. In 1923 he was elected to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee. He operated in the city of Shanghai, Hunan province, and Jiangxi province before Nationalist troops forced Mao and his comrades on the "Long March" from Jiangxi to Shaanxi province. In Yan'an, Shaanxi, Mao consolidated his power over the party and led the communist resistance to Japanese aggression, putting his faith not in the workers – as in traditional Communist theory – but in the peasants in the countryside. This greatly boosted communist popularity and eventually helped Mao and the Communist Party achieve victory in the Chinese Civil War after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

worth and potential. In this regard, despite many troubles in China, the students experienced considerable success.

This chapter covers an extremely important period in the history of American-educated Chinese students. It begins with bridging the gap between the recall of the C.E.M. students in 1881 and the U.S. decision to remit its portion of the Boxer Indemnity in 1908. The chapter then seeks to explain the origins and reasoning behind the Boxer Indemnity scholarships as well as their eventual implementation. Once this groundwork has been laid, more detail is revealed about the successes and failures of Chinese students to affect Sino-American Relations throughout the troubles of the early twentieth century. Finally, the chapter closes with the end of the Chinese Civil War,<sup>64</sup> the separation between the Guomindang on Taiwan and the communists on the mainland, and the effects of Chinese students on the U.S. response.

The United States did not see a complete lack of Chinese students between 1881 and 1908 –from the years the Chinese Educational Mission was recalled to the signing of the agreement establishing the Boxer Indemnity scholarships. However, these intervening years did see a change in the nature of Chinese education abroad. By 1906, approximately 300

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<sup>64</sup> The Chinese Civil War began during the Nationalist Northern Expedition in 1927 to quell the warlords in northern China. Chiang Kai-shek of the Nationalists saw his immense army as an opportunity to rid China of communist opposition as well and began a purge of communists and leftists. During the 1930s, Chiang repeatedly hunted down the communist armies. At one point, the Nationalist forces had the communists surrounded in the Jiangxi Soviet, but the Communists escaped through the “Long March.” In 1936, Chiang Kai-shek was captured by warlords in 1936 and handed over to the Communists, who refused to free him until an alliance against the Japanese was negotiated. Reluctantly, Chiang agreed, but the Second United Front (the first had fallen apart in 1927) existed in name only. Once the war against the Japanese was over, the civil war resumed in full, but regional dissatisfaction with the Nationalist regime helped the Communist forces gain momentum. The Nationalists fled to Taiwan between 1949 and 1950.

Chinese students were in America.<sup>65</sup> Rather than tight knit groups with heavy government supervision, a new trend developed: individual Chinese students came to America with ties to American missionary movements and either wealthy Chinese or (more often) American benefactors. Some managed to gain the support of provincial governments, but most students traveling to America after 1881 did so under the auspices of the Christian American Board for Foreign Missions.<sup>66</sup>

This is not to say that the Qing imperial government made no official efforts, but such forays were far less publicized and extensive than the C.E.M. had been. Granted, as early as 1902, a small group of students from the Beiyang School based in Tianjin arrived in California. They were the first officially government-sponsored students since the Chinese Educational Mission was recalled two decades earlier. It was from the roots of this group at the University of California that the Chinese Students' Alliance, an extremely influential organization promoting Chinese nationalism and political activism over the next forty years, was founded on the basis, as historian Ye Weili observes, of "instill[ing] patriotism in local, American-born Chinese youth, whose loyalty to China the students...had found wanting."<sup>67</sup> Other than this historic action, the Beiyang School's students are notable primarily for a hesitant return in official government policy to the prioritization of western learning.

Some of this was driven no doubt by feelings of inferiority following the disastrous Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Originally attempting to overthrow the Qing Dynasty and expel all foreign influence in China, the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, or "Boxers" as the Westerners referred to them, began cutting a merciless swathe through parts of northern

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<sup>65</sup> Ye Weili, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>66</sup> Bieler, 20.

<sup>67</sup> Ye, 21.



China. In desperation, the Empress Dowager Cixi backed the Boxers in their xenophobic and anti-Christian efforts, but the combined might of European and American military forces arrived to break the Boxer siege of Beijing. Unfortunately, over 500 foreign missionaries and Christian converts had already been killed.

In some cases, such as that of Fei Qihe, this violent reaction against foreign influence and especially Christianity instigated efforts to cross the Pacific and study in a Christian nation amongst the congregations who had funded and often provided their education in China. Many of these individual students prior to 1908 were already Christian converts. Fei was born into a Chinese Christian family in 1879. In 1898, Fei graduated from North China College, a school established and partially run by Congregationalist missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Teaching in Fenzhou, he soon became acquainted with Charles and Eva Price, members of the Oberlin Mission (part of the American Board) and graduates of Ohio's Oberlin College. He grew close to the Prices, and when they were killed in the turmoil of 1900, Fei took a strip of cloth provided by Charles Price from Fenzhou to Tianjin to inform the American consul of the missionaries' deaths.<sup>68</sup>

Fei remained in contact with the family and friends of the Prices at Oberlin in Ohio. In 1901, the Board offered him the opportunity to study at Oberlin College with the intention of taking over for the Prices in Fenzhou upon his return. Due to the Chinese Exclusion Act and other restrictions, immigration officers in San Francisco were deeply suspicious of all incoming Chinese. Fei and his classmate H.H. Kung spent weeks on a crowded ship and then more time in stuffy detention sheds with bars on the windows as diplomatic envoys worked out technicalities in their passports. They did not reach Oberlin until 1903, but they arrived in time for the dedication of a memorial to the murdered missionaries. Their presence helped

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<sup>68</sup> Bieler, 18-19.

reassure the missionary community of China's potential for Christian conversion. The Oberlin yearbook actually portrayed them as "mascots," and it is clear that the missionaries viewed them as signs of their own progress in modernizing China. Fei was not stupid (as the M.A. in Education he would receive from Yale University proved), and he could see the patronizing manners in which some in the American Board used him. Though indebted to and friendly with many missionaries at Oberlin, Fei left America with a deep sense of frustration largely due to the distasteful way in which most Americans and particularly local governments treated Chinese people; his time in the detention shed served as a prickly reminder. Despite bittersweet memories of his time in America, Fei worked the rest of his life to prolong a relationship between the Chinese people and American missionaries through the YMCA and government posts in the Guomindang government.<sup>69</sup>

Fei Qihe personified a bridge between American Christians and a larger Chinese populace in the years immediately following the Boxer Rebellion. In 1905, soon after the late 1902 renewal of America's Chinese Exclusion Act and the expiration in 1904 of the earlier U.S.-China treaty on immigration,<sup>70</sup> Chinese launched an anti-U.S. protest and began a boycott of American goods in China – the first such protest in the history of U.S.-China relations. The boycott was called for by Chinese merchants in the United States, and they swiftly rallied Chinese in China and overseas to their cause. Students hopeful to study in the United States were among the participants. Several Americans erroneously believed they recognized the source of Chinese frustration over their mistreatment in the United States. Among them was Harvard President Charles Eliot who insisted the boycott would quickly

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<sup>69</sup> Bieler, 22-23.

<sup>70</sup> The Act was renewed for ten years in 1892 by the Geary Act, and again in 1902. The law was made permanent in 1902, which caused extreme frustration in China, especially among hopeful students.

end if the activist students associated with it were appeased. Harvard, Yale, Cornell, and Wellesley offered scholarships for a very limited number of students. Despite its small scale, the effort paid off when 600 candidates took examinations for the latter three schools alone.<sup>71</sup> These actions paved the way for the educational experience which forged so many of Fei's contacts and for future opportunities through the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship program, which began in 1908.

The genesis of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships is as important to the historical impact of American-educated Chinese as its implementation. In negotiations over the Boxer Protocol in 1901,<sup>72</sup> the United States originally asked for a lower sum in reparations than the Qing government eventually offered. Missionaries, already sympathetic to the plight of the average Chinese family, criticized the American government for demanding what they believed to be an obscenely large amount of money. When they learned the United States government had received over \$24 million, over twice the original numbers proposed (roughly \$11 million), American missionaries clamored for a return of the excess. However, William Rockhill, the American foreign minister in Beijing, convinced President Theodore Roosevelt and his cabinet in 1907 the Qing government was incapable of using the money responsibly.<sup>73</sup> An alternative solution had to be arranged.

The Chinese capitalized on this sentiment through Liang Cheng, one of the graduates of the C.E.M. who was sent to Washington, D.C. in 1902 as minister to the United States.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Bieler, 40.

<sup>72</sup> See footnote 55 on page 26.

<sup>73</sup> Bieler, 42.

<sup>74</sup> Liang Cheng was already a skilled diplomat; he had previously served as secretary both to Viceroy Li Hongzhang at the peace treaty signing with Japan in 1895 and to Prince Chun at Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897.

As minister to the United States, he cleverly recognized one of America's greatest weaknesses at the time: overreaching fatherly pride. The United States viewed China and its people as children – children with potential, but children all the same. Understanding America's tendency to view itself as a city on a hill,<sup>75</sup> Liang wrote Secretary of State John Hay saying, "If your honorable country would take the lead [in returning excess indemnity payments], wherever the voice of righteousness spread, those countries would rise and follow it."<sup>76</sup>

Though Liang Cheng's voice was surely the first and perhaps most influential on the Chinese side, two other former C.E.M. students saw the idea through to fruition. Liang Tunyen negotiated with William Rockhill in Beijing over the intricacies of the plan in 1907 once a new Secretary of State, Elihu Root, convinced President Roosevelt of near certain public approval on both sides of the Pacific.<sup>77</sup> The scholarships would be rendered at the discretion of the Chinese government and were issued from 1909 through 1947 (with the exception of 1938-1944, years during the second Sino Japanese War). Tang Shaoyi, though originally arguing for more infrastructural benefits from returned funds, eventually became a public relations symbol for American-educated Chinese in the United States. Tang Shaoyi and Liang Tunyen sequentially held the position of Vice President of the Board of Foreign Affairs in 1907 and 1908 respectively, and immediately after the conclusion of the deal Tang was appointed Special Ambassador to Washington.<sup>78</sup> Tang Shaoyi not only attended the

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<sup>75</sup> The term "city upon a hill" is drawn from the book of Matthew in the Bible, but it was popularized in America by John Winthrop, an American Puritan reverend, in his sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" given aboard the ship before landing. The term evokes the idea that America would serve as a beacon of values for the world.

<sup>76</sup> Bieler, 45-46.

<sup>77</sup> LaFargue, 125-26.

signing of Roosevelt's executive order on December 28, 1908, but he invited more than a hundred Chinese students currently in the United States to attend with him.<sup>79</sup>

This return to a progressive westernized view on education was not spontaneous. China had begun extensive educational reforms around 1905, when both Chinese nationalism in the form of foreign boycotts and a reemphasis on western education began to pick up speed. The latter originated in the traumatic abolition of the civil service examinations after a five year suspension required by the Boxer Protocol,<sup>80</sup> signaling a clear shift in education policy. This reform in education and U.S.-China relations occurred alongside the deaths in 1908 of the Guangxu Emperor and the Empress Dowager Cixi only a day later. Perhaps shaken by her experiences on the run from foreign troops during the Boxer Rebellion – while troops attacked Beijing, the Empress Dowager helped set into motion the reforms in the final years of the Qing Dynasty. Many of the C.E.M. students like Liang Cheng, Liang Tunyen, and Tang Shaoyi, formerly pushed to the margins of government and shunned due to their American influence, were brought into power during this time as the fortunes of reformers improved.

One reason the former C.E.M. students were called up was their experience with Western powers. Not only Chinese students from America but those from other Western countries as well found new footing in this reform-friendly environment. Diplomats like Liang Cheng and Liang Tunyen understood the United States self-image of a doting father to more child-like nations, especially after the Spanish-American war of 1898 and the seizure of the Philippines as a new American colony. These men shrewdly took advantage of such

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<sup>78</sup> LaFargue, 119, 121.

<sup>79</sup> Bieler, 49.

<sup>80</sup> See p. 26, fn 56 for a description of the complete provisions of the Boxer Protocol.

emotions to give precedence to a very salient idea in China: the importance of education. However, they also realized that through education and a usage of students as “unofficial envoys” to develop relationships with American citizens, China could also eventually gain the help in infrastructure and technology the struggling nation so desperately needed. American politicians and statesmen were not sentimental fools; they recognized the Boxer Indemnity program as a chance for American-directed reform in China.<sup>81</sup>

To this end, China originally expected three things of students: first, Chinese students “should bring home [to China] the American spirit, such as cooperation, enterprise, loyalty, and discipline” and prepare to lead upon returning; second, they should study new technology; and thirdly they should teach Americans about Chinese culture and society.<sup>82</sup> Even before the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, students were also expected to become familiar with democracy while studying in America, in preparation for a promised parliamentary government in 1917.<sup>83</sup> China had very specific plans for their students in the United States. In fact, Tang Shaoyi’s invitation to the signing of Roosevelt’s executive order was not merely cordial. He took the opportunity to advise each student in attendance on their studies, suggesting a broad curriculum of study including engineering, liberal arts, debate, and Spanish in preparation for South American diplomatic positions.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ye, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Ting Ni, *The Cultural Experiences of Chinese Students Who Studied in the United States During the 1930s-1940s* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 88.

<sup>83</sup> According to various historical sources (such as historian Stacey Bieler) and online archives, among the Qing reforms was a promise to establish a parliamentary government by 1917 (following the example of the Japanese model of constitutional monarchy). Whether such a move was ever actually planned is debatable, but it appears the promises were brand new in 1908, given that a constitutional commission was set up in 1907 and local self-government allowed only in early 1908.

<sup>84</sup> Bieler, 49-50.

Despite the grand spectacle at Roosevelt's signing of the Boxer indemnity remission executive order on December 28, 1908, the Chinese government either made no attempt to engage the American press, or Chinese students were simply old news. Only a blurb entitled "Will Study In America" appeared in the *Washington Post* concerning the implementation of the scholarships.<sup>85</sup> Likewise, the number of Chinese students in the U.S. did not spike after 1908. Enrollment under the Boxer Indemnity program increased gradually, largely due to the unique process through which it was managed. Two tiers of examinations narrowed down the initial field of 640 candidates in 1909 to a small group of forty-seven young men – mostly from western-style missionary schools in China's larger cities.<sup>86</sup> Liang Tunyen's founding of Tsinghua University in 1908 was originally intended solely as a highly competitive preparatory school for students planning to study abroad – particularly in the United States. The school confused many of its students upon opening, however, because of its bewildering mixture of Chinese and American educational ideals – ranging from classic Chinese literature to Shakespeare and Abraham Lincoln.<sup>87</sup> Still, enrollment remained high and by 1918 the number of students in America had risen to 1,200.<sup>88</sup>

Unlike the C.E.M. in the 1870s, the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship program did not operate in one central location in the United States. Instead, it was spread out over the entire country, though definite concentrations of scholarship recipients occurred in the East and Midwest (See Table 1). Much like Huang Kaijia and Liang Tunyen in the 1870s, these students were viewed as exotic curiosities. The dramatic distances among which the students

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<sup>85</sup> *The Washington Post*, "Will Study In America," Sep 5<sup>th</sup>, 1909, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>86</sup> Bieler, 66.

<sup>87</sup> Bieler, 69.

<sup>88</sup> Ye, 9.

were spread coupled with a sense of isolation within American colleges consisting mostly of whites led to a fierce rise in both Chinese nationalism and associational behavior. Eventually, this led to the formation of the Chinese Students' Alliance to combat loneliness and bridge the gaps between universities.

<b>Table 1: Top Five American Colleges and Universities Granting Degrees to Chinese Students, 1854-1953<sup>89</sup></b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Degrees Total</b>
Columbia	New York	1,834
U of Michigan	Michigan	1,300
M.I.T.	Massachusetts	734
Harvard	Massachusetts	647
U of Illinois	Illinois	603

If China wanted to learn about democracy and America was eager to teach, the Chinese Students' Alliance offered an ideal opportunity. As mentioned previously, the Chinese Students' Alliance was originally founded in 1902 at a Congregational church near the University of California in San Francisco. It served as a voluntary organization with the major purpose of "unit[ing] all Chinese students on the broad, general ground of patriotism."<sup>90</sup> Similar groups arose in Chicago, Ithaca, and Berkeley over the next three years, and in August 1905 thirty-six students founded the Chinese Students' Alliance of the Eastern States.<sup>91</sup> In response, the Western units combined to form the Pacific Coast Chinese Students' Association, but as of 1909 neither organization had been incorporated into the World Chinese Students' Federation, instead choosing to remain an independent American entity. Already in 1909 the Eastern Alliance was notable for publishing the *Chinese Students' Monthly*, a magazine with political and popular articles written for and by Chinese students, all in English. This magazine became a central tool for American Chinese to express their views and opinions. In keeping with their responsibilities to the American Chinese

<sup>89</sup> Tabulated in "Patriots" or "Traitors"? by Stacey Bieler from *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years* (New York: National Tsing Hua University Research Fellowship Fund and China Institute of America, 1954), 40-50.

<sup>90</sup> Ballard.

<sup>91</sup> Bieler, 171.



community at large, they also published the *Chinese Students' Annual*, entirely in Chinese, with similar content.<sup>92</sup> In 1911, these two groups united into the broad Chinese Students' Alliance and remained active, supported by a sizable membership during the first third of the twentieth century.

This unity was made possible by Vi Kyuin Wellington Koo, an enterprising student who later became a crucial link between America and China. Koo was born in Shanghai to a family of four in 1887. Koo's family was already familiar with Western history and ideas, and for this reason they named Koo after the Duke of Wellington who had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. With his father's monetary support as a deputy bursar for the Chinese Merchants' Navigation Company, Koo attended St. John's, a missionary school in Shanghai, where he further developed his western connections before sailing to America to enroll in Cook Academy in New York in 1904.

From the beginning, Koo had ambitions to revolutionize Chinese diplomacy. In 1905, Koo left the academy to attend Columbia University and study political science; there, he quickly ascended to the presidency of the New York iteration of the Chinese Students' Alliance. From the beginning, V.K. Wellington Koo dabbled in Chinese politics. He met with Chinese commissioners studying western-style governments in 1906 and pushed the envelope with conservative Chinese by inviting Yung Wing to speak at an Alliance summer conference in 1907. He also ventured into American high society with the help of his professors. But it was in 1908 that he began his most lasting contribution to Chinese students in the United States when he attended a Joint Conference on unifying the various sections of

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<sup>92</sup> Ballard.

the Alliance. This was finally accomplished in 1911 with the creation of a formal constitution. Koo was widely credited as the primary founder of the Alliance.<sup>93</sup>

Koo's vision of a broad organization to stir political awareness, sustain a network of returned students from America, and moderate American perceptions of China and Chinese people quickly took shape. This last objective began before the club was ever consolidated and carried on after its demise, mostly because throughout the second generation period this activity occurred at the local level. Future historian Hong Ye broke from the former method of displaying China as a backward miserable land when he helped created the Chinese exhibit at the Methodist Church's Centenary World Exposition in Columbus, Ohio. Instead, he focused on "the solidarity of the human family and the duty of brotherly love," both values which Americans could latch onto with pride.<sup>94</sup> Students also pressed for a balancing of the educational exchange, hoping to convince universities to open new Chinese language departments. They met with limited success before the Alliance's collapse in 1931; the Washington, D.C.-based American Council of Learned Societies joined in advocating scholarships and fellowships for serious Chinese study.<sup>95</sup> Many local and regional conferences also sparked interest in the burgeoning young patriots and their vision of China, as evidenced by countless local news clippings collected by Henry Dana Fearing, a friend of Chinese ambassador Liang Cheng.<sup>96</sup> For multiple generations of Americans, outside of the

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<sup>93</sup> Bieler, 159-61.

<sup>94</sup> Bieler, 113.

<sup>95</sup> Bieler, 229.

<sup>96</sup> Ye, 238n36. Henry Fearing, a hatmaker from Amherst Massachusetts, was one of the first Americans to offer his home for the C.E.M. in the 1870s. His friendship with the Chinese students lasted through the first and second generations. He often hosted their conferences, which explains his collection of clippings. Many students found his patronage and advice central to their lives in America. He died in 1917 at age eighty-six.

portrayal of China and Chinese by Hollywood and through dime novels, Chinese students were a primary source for understanding the Chinese people and their culture.

Changes in China during the years 1911 and 1912 began to reflect this sense of a new China with enormous potential consequences. These years witnessed the collapse of the Qing Empire – the last Chinese dynasty. Despite all its attempts at reform, it was too late for the Qing. The Wuchang Uprising on October 10, 1911 ignited revolutionary fervor across China. Frightened and weak, the Qing court pulled the politically savvy General Yuan Shikai and his Beiyang army from northern China to quell the rebellion.<sup>97</sup> By 1912, the central revolutionaries had gained control over most of South China and had elected their leader Sun Yat-sen<sup>98</sup> President of the Republic of China. Rather than crush the revolutionaries, Yuan negotiated for the abdication of the emperor in exchange for the presidency of the new nation, a compromise his military strength made necessary for the new republic. Revolutionary fervor remained, but a pall of militarism hung over China.

Initially astir with democracy and a new national assembly, the Chinese Republic quickly deteriorated from threats both within and without. Yuan Shikai zealously suppressed Sun's Guomindang political party<sup>99</sup> and attempted, unsuccessfully, to reestablish monarchy

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<sup>97</sup> See footnote 54 on page 26. Yuan Shikai had been in forced retirement since the death in 1908 of his patron, Empress Dowager Cixi. Yuan was widely connected with Cixi's house arrest of the Guangxu Emperor and even implicated in his death. Between 1895 and 1911, Yuan had taken the opportunity to consolidate his army in northern China.

<sup>98</sup> Sun Yat-sen was born in Xiangshan (Zhongshan), Guangdong in 1866. At age thirteen, he moved to Hawaii to live with his elder brother, and eventually attended the prestigious Iolani School. After Hawaii was forcibly annexed by the American government, Sun was declared a U.S. citizen in 1904. American history influenced his political idealism and his conversion to Christianity. Increasingly disillusioned by the Qing Empire's domestic policies and traditional Chinese beliefs, Sun founded the Revive China Society in 1894 in Hawaii. In 1905, he organized and led the revolutionary organization *Tongmenghui*. He was in the United States gathering support for a revolution when the Wuchang Uprising occurred.

<sup>99</sup> The Guomindang (GMD), or Kuomintang in present-day Taiwan, was founded on August 25, 1912 from the various revolutionary groups which overthrew the Qing Dynasty. It can be traced as far back as Sun Yat-sen's

in China. In 1915, Japan asserted itself with the infamous Twenty-One Demands<sup>100</sup> – many of which infringed heavily on the sovereignty of the frail nation. Finally, in 1919 the first World War concluded with the Treaty of Paris and American President Woodrow Wilson's promises of self-determination; such promises collapsed, however, and Chinese students both at home and abroad rode a wave of anti-Western sentiment.

The gravity of such events was not lost on the students in America or their predecessors from the C.E.M. Most of the first generation of Chinese students was swept away by these developments, clinging to the sinking wreckage of the Qing Empire – many only held power through patrons in the Qing court. When they fell, many of these new diplomats and administrators from the first generation of students simply retired and sank into obscurity. Only Tang Shaoyi remained politically important in the post-1912 regime. Students at home, however, were much more active at the advent of the new Chinese Republic. At a Midwest conference of the Chinese Students' Club in 1912, 150 students celebrated their new nation by raising a new flag and singing their new national anthem.<sup>101</sup> Many felt the Chinese Students' Alliance was more important than ever now, because in

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Revive China Society. The party gained support from merchants and gentry in China, and is widely translated as China's Nationalist party.

<sup>100</sup> Issued by the Japanese government in 1915, the Twenty-One Demands consisted of five groups of demands followed up by warnings of dire consequences. The first four groups largely granted Japan natural resources in China or secured land acquisitions such as the major one in Shandong province. The fifth group, however, included such demands as inclusion of Japanese advisors within the Chinese government and Japanese administration of the Chinese police force. This last group most infuriated the Chinese people and was eventually dropped. Japan forced the Chinese government to sign a treaty accepting the remaining four groups of demands on May 25, 1915. May 7 (or in some places May 9) – the date of Japan's ultimatum leading to the May 25, 1915 treaty – was subsequently dubbed National Humiliation Day and officially recognized until 1926.

<sup>101</sup> Bieler, 179.

America the Alliance served as “a laboratory of self-government” to prepare the Chinese leaders of tomorrow.<sup>102</sup>

This type of thinking rang especially true for two outstanding students of the second generation: V.K. Wellington Koo and Hu Shi. Koo was recruited by Yuan Shikai through Tang Shaoyi in 1912 to serve as the new President’s English secretary. As a testimony to Koo’s widespread fame in the United States, newspapers from around the nation ran articles on his appointment.<sup>103</sup> One such article in the *New York Times* perhaps spoke to Yuan’s reasoning for choosing such a young and idealistic individual. In it, Koo defended the fledgling republic against a skeptical reporter, stating, “...the present Government will become established and China will remain a republic. The turbulent revolutionary conditions are fast passing away.”<sup>104</sup> Koo’s statement was made on April Fools’ Day, April 1, 1912, perhaps fitting timing considering that roughly three years later Yuan Shikai would dissolve the legislature and declare himself Emperor, only to be dethroned with the aid of his former protégé, Tang Shaoyi.<sup>105</sup>

The revolution also shoved one other student into international prominence, but in the United States rather than China. Hu Shi, a philosophy student at Cornell, gained renown in the U.S. as a consummate public speaker, capturing the attention of many Americans after 1912. Like many of his fellow students, Hu Shi was appalled by Japan’s humiliating Twenty-One Demands in 1915, but when his classmates panicked and made plans to return home Hu

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<sup>102</sup> Ye, 27.

<sup>103</sup> Bieler, 162.

<sup>104</sup> *The New York Times*, “Columbia Student Yuan’s Secretary,” April 1, 1912, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>105</sup> Bieler, 165.

Shi published a paper insisting, “Let us DO OUR DUTY which is TO STUDY.”<sup>106</sup> Certainly one student took this advice to heart and wrote a prize-winning essay condemning Japan; the *New York Times* gave the essay and the plight it discussed a particularly sympathetic treatment.<sup>107</sup> Hu Shi also signed a letter written at Cornell in 1915 protesting the Alliance’s favorable position on Yuan Shikai following his dissolution of the legislature and scuttling of the constitution. Clearly unafraid to speak his mind, Hu also focused on preserving ties with the United States by taking straw votes of Chinese students during U.S. elections and continuing to speak at engagements praising the relationship of the two countries. Hu returned to China in 1917 once his studies were complete but continued to reach out to Chinese students in America, stressing *baihua* (vernacular Chinese) as the language of revolution following the political firestorm surrounding the Versailles Treaty on May 4, 1919.<sup>108</sup> More than anyone, Hu has been credited as modernizing China culturally during what he termed the “Chinese Enlightenment.”<sup>109</sup>

Meanwhile, V. K. Wellington Koo managed to escape the fate usually awaiting students of failed mentors in China due mostly to his U.S. connections. At the time of Yuan’s death in 1916, Koo had been awarded the position of Chinese representative to the United

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<sup>106</sup> Bieler, 245.

<sup>107</sup> *The New York Times*, “Says Japan is Rapacious,” Mar 21, 1915, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>108</sup> The May 4<sup>th</sup> Incident was a May 4, 1919 demonstration organized by Chinese students in Beijing and Shanghai to protest the Versailles Treaty signed in April 1919 to end World War I. Originally, the students protested the granting of leasehold agreements in Shandong province – formerly granted to Germany – to Japan. The students also planned to raise awareness of China’s diplomatic position amongst the masses, create a massive demonstration in Beijing, and form a Beijing student union. The demonstration took place in front of Tiananmen, and the high level of support echoed after May 4, giving confidence to Chinese students and fueling the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement (1915-1921), which included efforts to spur nationalism and a movement in support of vernacular Chinese.

<sup>109</sup> R. Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 179.

States. He reestablished contact with and reinvigorated the Student Alliance. The Alliance's new energy showed when in 1919 it was revealed that the pro-Japanese Chinese minister of communication had signed a secret treaty with the Japanese granting them former German rights and privileges in Shandong province. The China Society of America, wishing to remain publicly aloof from politics, unleashed the students instead with a "request" to the Alliance to "prepare a statement for the American public" regarding the treaty.<sup>110</sup> In accepting its charge, the Students' Alliance joined with several national organizations in the United States to protest the treaty publicly.<sup>111</sup> Koo had actually been chosen to attend the Paris Peace Conference, and successfully argued the validity of student demands not to sign the treaty. Even more impressively, he successfully steered Chinese foreign policy in a pro-American direction after 1919, even after America ignored such Chinese protests and signed the Treaty of Versailles (though the U.S. Congress never ratified the treaty).<sup>112</sup>

After 1919, Japan's aggression gradually increased. Although the city of Qingdao in Shandong province was returned in 1921 at the Washington Conference concerning naval power among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, Chinese demands for regaining sovereignty from Japan in certain ports was categorically ignored. Over the next few years, Japan also claimed many special interests in Manchuria, China's northernmost province, something which drew particular ire from the Chinese Students' Alliance. They called

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<sup>110</sup> A.B. Humphrey, "China and the Peace Treaty," *The New York Times*, Sep 28, 1919, <http://www.proquest.com>. This editorial came in response to accusations that the China Society had meddled in American affairs by pressing against ratification of the treaty.

<sup>111</sup> "Chinese Protest Treaty," *The New York Times*, Jul 31, 1919, <http://www.proquest.com>. The other organizations joining the Chinese Students' Alliance included: the Chinese National Defense League, the Chinese Students of George Washington University, the Chinese Welfare Society of California, and the Chinese Patriotic Committee of New York.

<sup>112</sup> Bieler, 166.

attention to Japan's rapidly growing power by putting the nation on mock trial in a strange publicity stunt. It succeeded insomuch as it was reported by the *Washington Post*.<sup>113</sup> In 1925, conflict between Chinese workers and Japanese mill owners in Shanghai erupted into anti-Japanese sentiment, launching the May 30<sup>th</sup> Movement, a series of strikes and anti-Japanese demonstrations that lasted through 1926. This time, the Republic of China publicly worked through the Chinese Students' Alliance to bring their grievances to the attention of President Calvin Coolidge, whose cabinet had hinted at landing marines in Shanghai to protect American lives.<sup>114</sup> The students begged Coolidge to remember the "peace and friendship" between the two nations and to offer American diplomatic services to help calm the situation. Interestingly, Coolidge hurried to assure the Chinese that his cabinet was following just the policy of diplomatic settlement they had suggested.<sup>115</sup>

As serious as it was, Japanese aggression did not represent the primary conflict in this period, however. Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen's successor and charismatic leader of the Nationalist party (or Guomintang), consolidated his forces into the National Revolutionary Army and marched first on Nanjing in 1927 and later Beijing. Along the way, he used Western complaints of unrest in trading ports as excuses to purge and hunt down communists, whom he blamed for the problems plaguing China. V.K. Wellington Koo had returned to China in 1922 and eventually sided with the Manchuria-based warlord Zhang Zuolin, opponent of unification and the Guomintang, until Zhang's assassination by the

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<sup>113</sup> *The Washington Post*, "Students Arraign Japan at 'Trial'," Dec 27, 1921, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>114</sup> One rationale for such dependence on the Chinese Students' Alliance was its unwavering patriotism. With China split amongst warlords, the Guomintang Nationalist party, and – by 1927 – the communists, the Chinese Students' Alliance was one organization whose leadership was viewed as unlikely to be politicized by home factions. Despite political squabbling, the Alliance was primarily a patriotic and nationalistic organization with little in the way of general radicalism, possibly due to the moderating nature of conservative American society.

<sup>115</sup> Albert W. Fox, "Students' Alliance Makes Plea for America to Prevent Conflict," *The Washington Post*, Jun 6, 1925, <http://www.proquest.com>.



Japanese military in 1928. The Guomindang issued a warrant for Koo's arrest, sending Koo into exile in France.<sup>116</sup> Koo's leadership in the Alliance was sorely missed. In November 1927, the Alliance's *Chinese Student Monthly* published sharply critical editorials and political cartoons skewering the western nations. The issue drew strong reactions from Chinese and Americans alike. Though a significant number of students supported the accusations made,<sup>117</sup> at least one American business patron withdrew his support. The China Society of America, formerly quite enamored of the students' influence, took its turn to scold the Alliance for its newfound radicalism. In the words of historian Stacey Bieler: "Polarizing politics...foreshadowed the choices the students would encounter when they returned to China."<sup>118</sup> In the early 1930s, China was torn between Nationalist Party and Communist Party forces.

Though several attempts were made to reconcile the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chiang's Guomindang (GMD), each attempt eventually led back to civil war. On top of this, the Japanese sparked the Mukden Incident in 1931 – the bombing of a Japanese railroad in Mukden by Japanese military personnel but blamed on Chinese prompted the full-scale invasion of Manchuria. Japan set up Manchuria as a puppet state (Manchukuo). Harsh language flew back and forth between the Chinese and Japanese until Japan finally invaded China en masse in July 1937 at the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Unofficially,

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<sup>116</sup> Bieler, 168.

<sup>117</sup> For example, the issue highlighted Mississippi schools that discriminated against Chinese children on a racial bias. It also published two controversial political cartoons: one showed a white man removing his mask to reveal a devil underneath, the other showed a British soldier shooting a Chinese man and titled "British Bullets." Several of the articles also contained extremely harsh rhetoric for the times, insisting that pro-American Chinese diplomacy end.

<sup>118</sup> Bieler, 194-98.

several American military men such as Claire Chennault and his famous Flying Tigers<sup>119</sup> scrambled to Chiang Kai-shek's aid against Japan. The communists were largely left to fight their own battles. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States officially joined the war effort, and Japan was eventually defeated in 1945 after the U.S. dropped the first atomic bombs in history on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. War did not end, however, as the CCP and GMD resumed their own civil war first begun in 1927. Unfortunately for the Nationalists, years of inaction against the Japanese had hardened the peasant population against Chiang Kai-shek, while communist heroics were lauded across the north of China. With growing popular support in the countryside and guerilla warfare tactics, Mao Zedong, former assistant college librarian at Beijing University, swept to power at the head of his Red Army in 1949.

China's lengthy Civil War and the war with Japan vastly changed the demographics of China's American-educated students. Students' origins were mostly limited to three southeastern locations from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1930s: Shanghai, Jiangsu province, and Guangdong province.<sup>120</sup> English proficiency dropped meteorically; with education no longer a priority for the militaristic Chiang government in crisis mode, study of foreign languages dropped off almost entirely.<sup>121</sup> The median age of Chinese students in the U.S. increased during this period as well. European consultants in 1931 suggested that the number of students sent abroad be reduced as well as limited to college graduates. After 1937 and the

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<sup>119</sup> Claire Chennault was an American military aviator who served during World War I. He resigned from the military in 1937 and joined Chiang Kai-shek as "air advisor" and commander of the Flying Tigers air squadron, or the 1<sup>st</sup> American Volunteer Group – a group of former American military pilots recruited under Presidential sanction for protection of Chinese trade routes and occasional sorties with Japanese pilots. They are historically viewed as a highly successful air force with a high kill ratio.

<sup>120</sup> Ting, 88.

<sup>121</sup> Ting, 112.

beginning of open hostilities between Japan and China, the regulations tightened and numbers were reduced even further.<sup>122</sup> Much of the change reflected general concern for the preservation of China's intellectual class which the Guomindang firmly believed it would need for credibility immediately following the war. Japan's impressive navy kept watch over many Chinese ports, so only air travel was considered in any way "safe."

Studying abroad had fallen off by the 1930s anyway, mostly due to the haphazard nature of the Republic's government. Though America still officially paid its indemnity remission to the recently recognized (1928) GMD-run Republic of China, tense relations – driven in part by politically motivated students – and a lack of organization within the GMD limited the number of students sent to America. The regulations issued in 1931 did lend some organization to the business, but the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) interrupted indemnity fund payments from 1939 through 1943. Despite the existence of a war, such abandonment of educational goals didn't sit well with people on either side of the Pacific. One editorial to the *New York Times* criticized Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Soong Mei-ling<sup>123</sup>) for her flippant attitude towards education in America, and hinted at Soong's own education at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. It also reminded Americans of the nation's responsibility towards China at a time when reports from frustrated American advisors to Chiang were increasingly negative.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ting, 80-81.

<sup>123</sup> See footnote 130 on page 52. Soong Meiling, a member of the powerful Soong family, was a near-constant force in Washington, D.C., lobbying for support of the Nationalist government. Her ties to powerful lobbyists lasted through the retreat to Taiwan in 1949.

<sup>124</sup> Margaret Chanler Aldrich, "We Aided Education in China," *The New York Times*, Mar 6, 1943, <http://www.proquest.com>.

During the early years of the war, Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared American neutrality in the Second Sino-Japanese War. Though students lacked the influence they once had through the Chinese Students' Alliance, they attracted attention to the war effort in smaller, more human ways. According to Chinese-American historian Ting Ni, "It was common to see some students standing on street corners in bleak winter or hot summer afternoons shaking a can for donations."<sup>125</sup> One news article detailed vitamins purchased by Chinese students at Cornell destined for a researcher at Tsinghua College with hopes of fighting soldier fatigue.<sup>126</sup> These students received special attention because the donations were for the war effort, not themselves; yet newspapers as early as 1937 commented on the lack of funds available to students stranded as the lines of communication with mainland China broke down.<sup>127</sup> When the U.S. did declare war on Japan and the Axis powers of Germany and Italy after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, many Chinese students used what little money they had to purchase United States Defense Bonds.<sup>128</sup>

However, as the war wound down, the Chinese student population in America quickly snowballed. Between 1944 and 1945, the number of students doubled from 270 to 543. In the first two years after World War II ended the number doubled again to 1194 in 1947.<sup>129</sup> Many of these students remained graduate students and scientists who desperately wanted to give back to China their research at a time when military expansion and contracts were funding

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<sup>125</sup> Ting, 143.

<sup>126</sup> *The New York Times*, "Buy Vitamins for China," Dec 16, 1940, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>127</sup> *The New York Times*, "Chinese Students In U.S. Pinched By War," Oct 3, 1937, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>128</sup> Ting, 144.

<sup>129</sup> Ting, 81.

enormous growth in engineering industries. Most of the major Chinese universities in Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing had been captured and ransacked during the Japanese invasion; proper educational facilities just didn't exist in China. Unlike at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Japan was out of the question as a destination for Chinese students anxious to study abroad, and Europe was just as war-torn. Once again, America was the primary destination for ambitious, patriotic Chinese who were not just looking to escape tragedy, but were full of hope that they could return to "fix" China.

The United States, meanwhile, had developed a profound sense of paranoia through its dealings with Joseph Stalin, the iron-fisted tyrannical leader of the communist Soviet Union in Russia from 1922 until his death in 1953. The prospect of a communist regime in China – erroneously considered a key U.S. ally during World War II – was daunting for the general public. Besides, with American favorites like Hu Shi serving as Chinese ambassador to the U.S. from 1938 to 1942 and two sisters from the American-educated Soong family<sup>130</sup> firmly attached to the capitalist Guomindang government, it was difficult to ignore Nationalist pleas for aid. During the four years following the end of World War II, the United States not only subsidized Chinese education in America, it also worked with the China Institute of America to provide engineers with paid and practical training through President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Depression-era creation, the Tennessee Valley Authority.<sup>131</sup>

However, not everyone worked so assiduously with the United States to ensure a GMD victory. Just as the CCP and GMD existed in China, so did these parties find their way

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<sup>130</sup> The three Soong sisters were the daughters of an American-educated Methodist minister named Charlie Soong, who made a fortune in banking and the publishing of Bibles. His daughters Soong Ai-ling, Soong Ching-ling, and Soong Mei-ling all married wealthy, important men tied to the Nationalist Party and government. Respectively, the daughters married H.H. Kung, the ROC's finance minister, Sun Yat-sen, and Chiang Kai-shek. They each served as politicians in their own rights as well. Soong Ching-ling eventually supported the People's Republic of China after 1949.

<sup>131</sup> Ting, 109.

into the politics of American-educated Chinese once again. Though most students originally accepted the Guomindang's propaganda concerning communism, increasing evidence of communist military success on the mainland led to a matched increase in recruitment activity in America as well. Students viewed the GMD as increasingly incompetent and corrupt. In 1948 and 1949, two communist organizations gained ground among American educated Chinese: the "Reading Group" and the Chinese Scientist Association founded in Chicago. The latter believed that the Guomindang's policies stunted scientific research; the CCP would allow it to flourish.<sup>132</sup>

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949, Mao Zedong spoke from the wall of the Forbidden City overlooking Tiananmen Square his famous line, "The Chinese people have stood up!", as he founded the People's Republic of China. Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang fled to the island of Taiwan. From the peak entry rate in 1948, students sent to the United States immediately declined. Communists felt America could not accept their politics, and Chiang had to consolidate power once more – this time in Taiwan. Now the choice remained for students: where was China? American diplomats were asking a similar question. In the end, the answer seemed to lie with those Chinese most familiar with America, the American-educated Chinese who represented much of Chiang's family and cabinet – among them, V.K. Wellington Koo.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Koo, undaunted after years of exile, returned to China with his arrest warrant forgiven, ready to serve the Guomindang government. In 1946, China once again appointed him ambassador to the United States. In a final act of preservation for a community he had long represented and defended, Koo requested \$500,000 from the U.S. for the roughly 3,900 students stranded in the country following the

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<sup>132</sup> Ting, 136-37.

collapse of the Nationalist government in 1949.<sup>133</sup> Koo served as ambassador during the final years of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships and saw them end in 1949. His insistence on the importance and necessity of the American-educated students as his very government crumbled at home made possible one final extension of funds for a group he and so many others had viewed as the hope of China.

Ultimately, war and revolutionary change in China trampled the hope the students of the second generation embodied. Through the Chinese Students' Alliance in the early 1900s and later sheer patriotism, American-educated Chinese students sought to manipulate and influence a relationship they imagined as comrades in arms. Amongst the populace at large, these students were largely successful at presenting China as a potential home for democracy. In contrast, the American government viewed China as a fledgling nation originally requiring the guiding hand of a doting father. By the 1950s, however, China had exhausted the United States. The students had not failed, but their victory was not entirely what they expected. Through personal relationships developed and perceptions created, Chinese students passively convinced Americans that they could not give up on the ROC on Taiwan and the hopeful democrats and capitalists the United States had helped train. This aspect of their efforts remained the American-educated Chinese student's most lasting success. Those students who returned to the mainland, however, were not so lucky.

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<sup>133</sup> Bieler, 170.

### **Chapter 3: The Lost Generation**

#### **Taiwan and the Mainland, 1949-1979**

American-educated Chinese had been one hope for China's future during the period of the second generation. Though some missionaries still clung to this idealistic view of Chinese students in the United States, the Cold War era marked a definite turning point in the history of Chinese students in the United States.<sup>134</sup> The third generation that began trickling in following the end of World War II in 1945 served Sino-American relations more as a political tool. From the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 through the normalization of relations with the mainland on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979, Chinese students from the mainland, Taiwan, and elsewhere emerged as one more bargaining chip in the all-consuming Cold War.

The devastating Nationalist defeat in the civil war with the Communists in 1949 left roughly 6000 Chinese students stranded in the United States.<sup>135</sup> The chaos on both the mainland and Taiwan in addition to the founding of the communist government in Beijing forced the U.S. government to immediately cease both the Boxer Indemnity scholarships and a new Fulbright program for graduate study negotiated by Secretary of State George C. Marshall.<sup>136</sup> The Chinese "imbroglio" separated huge numbers of Chinese students, mostly graduate students between the ages of twenty and forty, from their homes and families in China and cut them off from their premiere source of funding. Although the Chinese

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<sup>134</sup> Mary Ann Callan, "Chinese Youth Target of Christian Minister," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 3, 1965, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>135</sup> Donald G. Leitch, "China Students in Exile," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1952, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>136</sup> Li Hongshan, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 164.



Exclusion Act of 1882 was repealed in 1943 during World War II, American immigration laws still prevented Chinese students from gaining employment in the United States.<sup>137</sup> Their situation was dire, but sheer numbers and the sympathy of the American press were on their side. After decades of sponsoring the education of Chinese students, neither the American public nor Congress was able in good conscience to leave these students stranded.

The U.S. State Department championed the cause of the stranded students. Originally only able to squeeze \$8,000 from a separate bill for supporting the Nationalist government in China in 1948, each grantee received merely \$100. Unfortunately, the State Department launched its effort at the same time that a strong anti-spending and isolationist backlash swept over Washington, D.C. Still, any action was lauded by the press and the public, the prime example being the Foreign Aid Appropriation Act of 1950, which firmly established the Program of Emergency Aid to Chinese Students run jointly by the State Department and the Economic Cooperation Association.<sup>138</sup> The State Department's obligation to the students soon forced it into conflict with the Justice Department over the students' rights to provide for themselves given their inability to return home as the Korean War<sup>139</sup> raged on and both Nationalist and Communist governments were busy consolidating power. Responding to accusations the government was soft on communism, the Immigration and Naturalization Service flung warrants left and right at students who were illegally working in order to get by

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<sup>137</sup> *The Washington Post*, "Chinese Students," Apr 4, 1950, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>138</sup> Li, 165-66.

<sup>139</sup> After years of tension along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel – the boundary between communist North Korea and an anti-communist South Korea – war began when the North Korean Army invaded the South on June 25, 1950. The war was really a proxy war between the United States and the communist nations of the PRC and the Soviet Union. Two days after the invasion, American President Truman ordered the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet into the Taiwan Strait to protect the fledgling ROC. On November 1, 1950, contact with China's People's Liberation Army was first made by American troops. Though the American (nominally UN) forces had initial success, they were eventually forced back to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel by communist forces and the war ended in a stalemate.

with their schooling.<sup>140</sup> Under heavy criticism from universities and the State Department, the Justice Department finally relented on April 13, 1951, allowing Chinese students the ability to work and stay indefinitely in the United States.<sup>141</sup>

However, this policy was double-edged. It did not so much allow as compel students to remain in America. By 1950, the State Department had already banned any Chinese students with engineering or science degrees from returning to China.<sup>142</sup> Deportations by immigration services stopped, and the United States made a conscious effort to keep all stranded Chinese on American soil, thereby ending any official Sino-American educational exchange. Such actions did not entirely contradict the general good feelings the press and public shared for the Chinese students. Instead, Americans believed the government was doing them a service by preventing them from returning to Chinese governments that would either heavily persecute them or co-opt their services for use against America in the Cold War. One editorial described them as “striking a blow for freedom.”<sup>143</sup> Chang Pen Hsu, 43, and Han Ying Ku, 30, were among many students forced to reside in the United States. They petitioned the United States government and even the United Nations for the opportunity to return to their families in China.<sup>144</sup>

Many students viewed American activities as little more than persecution, which didn’t help quell their urge to return to friends and family. Most of these activities consisted

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<sup>140</sup> James Reston, “Chinese Students in Country Stir Fight of U.S. Agencies,” *The New York Times*, Mar 9, 1951, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>141</sup> *The New York Times*, “Chinese Get Haven Here,” Apr 15, 1951, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>142</sup> Li, 172.

<sup>143</sup> Leitch.

<sup>144</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, “Two Chinese Students in Pasadena Petition U.N.,” Dec 15, 1954, <http://www.proquest.com>.

of little more than public paranoia inspired by rabid McCarthyism<sup>145</sup> and anti-communist propaganda in the United States. At the same time the American government was offering the carrot in the form of financial aid, it struck with the stick as well. Government officials claimed to be “keeping a close watch on several thousand Chinese students, teachers, and technical trainees.”<sup>146</sup> These words were no idle threats; three Chinese students were deported in 1950 for anti-American rhetoric such as “Americans are backward and have nothing to be proud of.”<sup>147</sup> Other Chinese students in the Society of Chinese Students and Professionals in America tried to salvage American trust by publishing a manifesto in which they insisted, “We are bitterly opposed to the Chinese Communist regime, and we vigorously protest its attempt to turn China into a battleground for the sake of the Soviet imperialists’ selfish desire for world conquest.”<sup>148</sup>

The case of Professor Qian Xuesen, a famous jet propulsion expert at the California Institute of Technology, is of particular historical interest. Accused of communist affiliations, Qian decided to leave the United States with his family. Before he could leave, however, Immigration and Naturalization placed a detention order on him, and the professor was arrested as a spy in 1950. Shortly afterwards, four students attempting to return to China were stopped on board their boat home and forcibly brought back to the United States under

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<sup>145</sup> Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) served as a U.S. senator from 1947 until his death in 1957. He gained fame through his constant and often unfounded accusations that many Americans were secretly Communists and Soviet spies. McCarthy was censured by the Senate in 1954 for his actions after investigating Army General Ralph Zwicker, a hero of World War II. His actions gave rise to the term “McCarthyism” for the paranoia surrounding communism in the United States.

<sup>146</sup> *The Washington Post*, “U.S. Keeps Close Watch On Chinese Students,” Sep 1, 1950, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>147</sup> *The Washington Post*, “Three Chinese Students Slur U.S., Get Gate,” Sep 1, 1950, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>148</sup> *The New York Times*, “Chinese Society Assails Reds,” Dec 20, 1950, <http://www.proquest.com>.

charges of collusion with Professor Qian.<sup>149</sup> Ironically, the government found no evidence of communist connections; the experience embittered Qian so much that when finally allowed to leave, he returned to the People's Republic of China where he quickly became a renowned researcher. Years later, he received a national medal for his contributions to the development of China's first atom bomb.<sup>150</sup>

While financial aid and well-publicized legislation to aid stranded Chinese worked on the majority of students, many still pined for home. In the process, they were often marked as harmful elements in society who upset the status quo. The United States saw an opportunity to foist them off on the People's Republic of China in 1954 during talks in Geneva. The media pressured the government to offer Chinese students – even those with degrees in science and engineering – as exchange for American airmen from the Korean War and civilians held over from 1949. In news articles and letters to the editor at the time, Americans appeared desperate for an exchange. One group rationalized the exchange by suggesting that returned students may actually change China rather than succumb to brainwashing.<sup>151</sup> One journalist boiled the argument down to intraparty politics in the U.S., insisting that the GOP Senate leader, William Knowland (R-California), would vote against any treaty allowing the return of Chinese students.<sup>152</sup> In early 1955, United Nations chief Dag Hammarskjöld entered negotiations with Zhou Enlai, premier of the People's Republic of China, who reportedly did

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<sup>149</sup> *The New York Times*, "U.S. Seizes 4 Chinese In Jet Document Case," Sep 21, 1950, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>150</sup> Li, 172, 206.

<sup>151</sup> Hans H. Frankel, Elizabeth Huff, Richard G. Irwin, Arthur E. Link, Michael C. Rogers, and Arnold H. Rowbotham, "Exchange With China," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, Jun 9, 1954, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>152</sup> Drew Pearson, "About Those Chinese Students," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, Dec 21, 1954, <http://www.proquest.com>.

not make the return of Chinese students a condition for the release of the eleven American airmen.<sup>153</sup> However, as Zhou let the decision linger into April, America released seventy-six students with a private understanding that China would then release fifty-six Americans, including civilians and soldiers. *The Washington Post and Times Herald* commented that, if nothing else, “it relieves the United States of a guilty conscience and makes its moral position entirely clear.”<sup>154</sup>

The situation for the intellectual class throughout mainland China and the island of Taiwan was grim. Americans truly believed Chinese students were better off in the United States, especially as stories filtered out of China about mistreatment of intellectuals even amongst America’s allies in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek set a frustrating tone for the revived Republic of China on Taiwan in 1947 with his administration’s response to the February 28<sup>th</sup> (228) Incident, when guards fired on demonstrators marching in protest. The government’s crackdown in ensuing weeks resulted in thousands of deaths. Clearly, the Republic of China was a one-party regime under the Guomindang, fanatical about maintaining the status quo. According to Denny Roy, author of *Taiwan: a Political History*, “More interested in combating what they saw as unpatriotism than in stimulating constructive political debate, the [Nationalist government’s] public security organs employed their powers bluntly.”<sup>155</sup> A Taiwanese professor and two students were arrested in 1964 at National Taiwan University for distributing seditious literature; their trial lasted only a day, and each received prison

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<sup>153</sup> *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, “Mission a Success, U.N. Chief Declares,” Jan 15, 1955, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>154</sup> *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, “The Chinese Students,” Apr 4, 1955, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>155</sup> Denny Roy, *Taiwan: a political history* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 89.

terms. The professor was released after five years under pressure from an embarrassed United States.<sup>156</sup>

Oppression at home discouraged Chinese students abroad from returning home even to Nationalist China. American-educated Chinese had been trained to participate in and help build democracy – this ideal seemed futile in Taiwan in the two decades after the Nationalist relocation in 1949. In 1966, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “Only 5.47% of the 9,392 Nationalist Chinese students who left in the past seven academic years have returned to Formosa.... Most went to the United States.”<sup>157</sup> The Guomindang security apparatus followed students abroad however, even spying on them and punishing any anti-Nationalist views voiced overseas.<sup>158</sup> Chiang’s crackdown in Taiwan caused a “brain drain” to the United States as approximately 2,500 students and scholars traveled to America each year – only five percent had plans to return. This led one American paper to predict “as the old Kuomintang leadership dies, the lack of political vitality here is bound to affect the future organizational structure of the Taiwanese government.”<sup>159</sup> Apparently, the Taiwanese government agreed, because by the early 1970s, officials took steps to counter the brain drain, including a short-lived and controversial plan to establish special research professorships with double the normal pay scale. Though almost all students were self-supported, the Nationalist government limited the number to college students attending

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<sup>156</sup> Roy, 92.

<sup>157</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, “U.S. Gets Students,” Mar 12, 1966, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>158</sup> Roy, 92.

<sup>159</sup> Stanley Karnow, “The Screws Tighten in Chiang’s China,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, Dec 8, 1973, <http://www.proquest.com>.

approved graduate schools and having passed English proficiency tests. Still, 77% had decided to remain in the United States by 1971 citing “a better academic climate.”<sup>160</sup>

Conditions on the mainland were no better. Though original reports of heavy persecution of intellectuals in the People’s Republic of China were largely propaganda, events quickly progressed to the detriment of American-educated Chinese. Chairman Mao Zedong and his right-hand man, Premier Zhou Enlai, incorporated many experts in the early years and made speedy progress in land reform and rebuilding the countryside. Their triumphs seemed to peak at the close of the Korean War in 1953, however, just after having held off the U.S. military, the strongest military force on earth at the time. But by 1955, when many of the American-educated Chinese who wished to return were finally arriving back on the mainland, the People’s Republic of China was boiling with frustration at the United States.<sup>161</sup> Most mainland students attending schools abroad were sent to the Soviet Union<sup>162</sup> to study engineering instead, much to America’s chagrin.<sup>163</sup>

The final returned students from America arrived just in time for Chairman Mao Zedong to “let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend.”<sup>164</sup> As the

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<sup>160</sup> *The New York Times*, “Taiwan Fighting Its ‘Brain Drain’,” Apr 18, 1971, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>161</sup> *The New York Times*, “Last Chinese Students Go,” Sep 21, 1955, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>162</sup> In the early 1950s, China took many of its cues from Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance signed in February, 1950 formed the backbone of the Sino-Soviet Alliance. Mao reinforced a dedicated policy of “red,” or party loyalty, over “expert” technical skill. China also worked off the economic policy of five-year plans, a soviet invention. In keeping with the treaty provisions, Soviet engineers also poured into China during this period to help modernize the Chinese nation and oversee military and industrial projects. The treaty also promised the return of the Changchun Railway and Port Arthur, both held by Russia at the time of the agreement.

<sup>163</sup> *The New York Times*, “Chinese Students Go to Russia,” Aug 4, 1953, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>164</sup> This is not actually a quote from Mao, but rather from a famous Chinese poem. Mao used the quote to signal intellectuals that criticism could become a well-intentioned debate to improve society. Historians disagree whether Mao truly anticipated positive change, or if he merely began the movement to set a trap for critical intellectuals to expose themselves.

Hundred Flowers Campaign to open the government and its policies to criticism and debate got underway in 1956, American-educated students, along with thousands of other intellectuals, lent hopeful voices alongside heavy criticism that the Communist government could not ask them to be both “red” and “expert.”<sup>165</sup> The backlash surprised Mao, and the tables suddenly turned. By the end of 1956, American-educated students found themselves the focus of anti-rightist sentiment. Around the same time Hu Shi was elected President of the China Institute in the United States where he lived,<sup>166</sup> authors in China published an eight-volume collection criticizing him and his work calling him, among other things, “a faithful slave of American imperialism.”<sup>167</sup> In 1957, Mao officially launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign to purge intellectuals too critical of socialism and the Communist regime.

During the Anti-Rightist Campaign, many American-educated students found themselves labeled as bourgeoisie. In the case of Fu Ying – a chemistry professor at Beijing University who had returned to China after hearing Mao’s founding speech in 1949 – he only escaped exile to the countryside through the direct interference of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.<sup>168</sup> Most who wished to survive in such a volatile climate were forced to adapt. A group of elite scholars developed who found ways to apply communism to their various fields of study. Many American-educated students were forced to make confessions of their past misdeeds amongst capitalist Americans. This elite group took these self-confessions to the extreme, earning the label *feng pai*, the wind faction. *Feng pai* people, as Anne Thurston,

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<sup>165</sup> Ting, 274.

<sup>166</sup> *The New York Times*, “China Institute Elects,” Feb 26, 1956, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>167</sup> Sun Sibai, “Eliminate Hu Shi’s Reactionary Political Ideas” (1956), in *Land Without Ghosts*, trans. and ed. R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989), 257.

<sup>168</sup> Ting, 276.



Senior Research Professor of China Studies at John Hopkins University explains, “blow with the prevailing wind, no matter how frequently it shifts, how far from course it veers.”<sup>169</sup>

For most historians, the Anti-Rightist Campaign signaled the beginning of the downward slope in treatment of Chinese intellectuals that China would take place over the next two decades. Mao began a period of rapid reform in 1958 with the Great Leap Forward, a series of ambitious projects aimed at transforming China into a modern agricultural and industrial nation that ultimately led to famine and countless chunks of useless pig iron. Mao’s hope for grand and revolutionary triumph spat in the face of structured Communist five-year plans influenced by the USSR, and a rift between China and the Soviet Union began to grow. By 1966, the last few Chinese students in Russia returned home with Mao’s “Little Red Book” in hand.<sup>170</sup> These little red books, officially titled *Quotations of Chairman Mao Zedong*, contained numerous quotations from Mao’s works and served as a symbol of the Cultural Revolution<sup>171</sup> – Mao’s final attempt at grand revolutionary progress. Mao Zedong’s encouragement to the Chinese people to relive the Chinese Revolution leading up to CCP victory in 1949 predictably ended in disaster. Foreign offices shut down, gangs roamed the streets, and the political climate was chaos at best. By the end of the 1960s, Mao had

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<sup>169</sup> Anne F. Thurston, *Enemies of the People* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 57.

<sup>170</sup> Vincent J. Burke, “Last of Red China Pupils Quit Russia,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 28, 1966, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>171</sup> The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution engulfed mainland China in turmoil intermittently from 1966 to 1976. Mao launched the new revolution on May 16, 1966 with the claim that liberal elements in the party were stifling socialist progress and could only be removed through genuine revolution. He depended on People’s Liberation Army general and Minister of Defense Lin Biao to stir up armies of youth known as Red Guards who fought against the four olds: old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. Mao’s wife Jiang Qing rose to power following the suspicious death of Lin Biao in 1971; she led the “Gang of Four” which opposed targeted moderates like Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping and attempted to keep the revolution alive. By the end of the Cultural Revolution, Mao and Zhou were dead, the Gang of Four were arrested, and Deng Xiaoping was once more rehabilitated within the Communist party.

relinquished some of his ideals and reestablished CCP and government power, but at the cost of thousands of lives and an undeclared border war with the Soviet Union.

In 1971, world events began to shift in favor of the People's Republic of China. U.S. President Richard Nixon, eager to seize a major foreign policy victory to secure his reelection, sent National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger to China for secret negotiations with Zhou Enlai. That same year, the annual vote to seat the PRC in the United Nations (UN) came up just as news leaked of Kissinger's second trip to China. The United States' UN delegation was flabbergasted at the news; it served to undermine the coalition UN Ambassador George H.W. Bush had attempted to build, and the PRC was seated in place of the Republic of China.<sup>172</sup> Kissinger had gone ahead to prepare the way for a dramatic turn of events and apparent change in U.S. policy toward China when Richard Nixon personally visited China in February 1972.<sup>173</sup> Taiwan and Chiang Kai-shek in particular were stunned by the sudden shift in diplomacy. Nixon left China having given serious concessions on Taiwan in the Shanghai Communiqué<sup>174</sup> and the promise of imminent normalization of relations between the two nations – a dream he would not see fulfilled in office due to the Watergate scandal which plagued his second term and eventually forced his resignation in August 1974.

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<sup>172</sup> Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed The World* (New York: Random House, 2007), 216-17.

<sup>173</sup> President Nixon and Henry Kissinger planned two secret meetings with Chinese leaders in 1971 to arrange the dramatic meeting between Nixon and Mao in 1972. They believed that if China became a U.S. ally, it could serve as a crucial balance against the Soviet Union. They engaged Chinese leaders in secrecy both to maintain control over policy decisions and avoid media backlash.

<sup>174</sup> The Shanghai Communiqué signed in 1972 included both a reaffirmation of the beliefs of both the U.S. and China. It proclaimed that all Chinese people maintained there was but one China and pledged to work towards normalization of relations with the mainland. It also sought to minimize international military conflict in Asia. The communiqué set the United States on the path to the cessation of formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

The establishment of less hostile relations between the U.S. and the PRC along with the promise of normalization spurred several resurgences in long stagnant U.S.-China educational exchanges from both mainland China and Taiwan. In 1974, the Republic of China's Academia Sinica – its highest ranking academic body – established the Institute of American Studies. Eager to preserve what relationship it had left with the United States, Taiwan heavily emphasized educational exchange. Perhaps shocked into action, over 1,100 students and scholars returned to Taiwan in 1973. Taiwan's Vice President Yen Chia-kan said, "the United States and the Republic of China have as much in common for the future as for the past," hinting at future democratic reform.<sup>175</sup>

Meanwhile, no sooner had Nixon left China in 1972 than English language programs cropped up across the mainland. Language study was given priority in both elementary schools and universities as China prepared to jump start its educational exchange program with the West.<sup>176</sup> Rumors circulated, but no official word on educational exchange was mentioned in China or the United States for five long years. Though only a deputy premier in 1977, it was already clear to most people that a newly rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping<sup>177</sup> pulled the strings behind Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng, Mao's hand-picked successor to paramount leadership of the CCP. In 1977, Deng first announced, "To send students abroad

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<sup>175</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, "Sino-American Relations: A Study in Partnership," Oct 6, 1974, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>176</sup> Donald Bremner, "Students Start English Early in China Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1972, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>177</sup> Deng Xiaoping had been a comrade of Mao's on the Long March away from Nationalist persecution during the Chinese Civil War. As an administrator in Mao's post-1949 regime, he and fellow pragmatist Liu Shaoqi drew the ire of Mao and eventually became victims of the Cultural Revolution. He was rehabilitated in 1973 but purged again in 1976. Following the death of Mao Zedong and the arrest of the politically unstable Gang of Four in 1976, Deng Xiaoping made his way back into power in 1977 and 1978.

to study is also a concrete step [in modernization].”<sup>178</sup> More hints followed. In August, 1978, a Chinese professor indicated that “within two years there may be as many as ten thousand Chinese students in foreign schools.” European nations claimed the number was too low. At the same time, the White House hinted at renewed educational exchange, touting “the United States would welcome such a program.”<sup>179</sup>

In fact, only a month before, a delegation consisting of White House science advisor Frank Press and director of the U.S. liaison office and future U.S. Ambassador to China Leonard Woodcock met with Fang Yi, chairman of China’s Science and Technology Committee. The Americans had considered student exchange a bargaining chip in their trade talks, believing cultural exchange to be imperative for healthy relations but perhaps too soon for China. They were pleasantly surprised then, when not only did the Chinese agree, they already had the number of 500 in mind for the first exchange.<sup>180</sup> By August 17, 1978 the program was ready. This time, the exchange would go both ways, with American students promised opportunities to study in China and over twenty-five American universities lining up for the influx of Chinese students.<sup>181</sup> Stories of renewed educational exchange swarmed the media. Stanford reported its first Chinese student in thirty years.<sup>182</sup> Huang Hai-ni at Wellesley College in Massachusetts altered her name to Roni Wang and tried to downplay

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<sup>178</sup> Qian Ning, *Chinese Students Encounter America*, trans. T.K. Chu (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2002), 10-11.

<sup>179</sup> *The Washington Post*, “China is Seeking to Send Thousands in Study to West,” Aug 2, 1978, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>180</sup> Qian, 8-9.

<sup>181</sup> *The Washington Post*, “Student-Exchange Program Readied,” Aug 17, 1978, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>182</sup> Linda Matthews, “Stanford to Enroll Chinese Students,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sep 22, 1978, <http://www.proquest.com>.

her position as the first mainlander to study in the U.S. since 1949.<sup>183</sup> On December 15/16, 1978, the United States and People's Republic of China concurrently announced they would establish normal diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979. Five days before, on December 26, 1978, the first wave of government sponsored Chinese students to study in America since 1949 boarded a plane for the United States.<sup>184</sup>

For much of the thirty years after the founding of the People's Republic of China, American-educated Chinese had become little more than political tools in the games of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, and the United States. Those unlucky enough to be stranded in America after 1949 faced divided loyalties and sometimes persecution. American-educated Chinese students on the mainland or Taiwan discovered things were no different in either China. The Cold War extinguished the hope of many intellectuals, and a generation of American-educated Chinese was lost to propaganda and paranoia. However, by 1979, American education represented hope once more for Chinese students. The promise of technology for the mainland and democracy for Taiwan started a fever for American universities, and once more China looked to America to train its future leaders.

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<sup>183</sup> Jay Mathews, "Peking to Wellesley: Student is First of Hundreds," *The Washington Post*, Oct 24, 1978, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>184</sup> Qian, 11.

## **Chapter 4: There and Back Again**

### **Post-Normalization, 1979-2000s**

In the late twentieth century, Chinese students rushed to the shores of North America for the latest research and broadest education. During the late 1980s and 1990s, China made the news repeatedly for what was referred to as a “brain drain” – an epidemic of students coming to and remaining in the United States rather than returning home. Taiwan had faced the same issue only a decade earlier in the 1970s, but the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989 reinforced a rush from the mainland, culminating the 1980s decade of rapid influxes of Chinese students and scholars to the U.S. In recent years, however, the dynamic has been almost completely reversed. American-educated Chinese students, scholars and scientists are returning to China in droves; suddenly China, not the U.S., is the land of opportunity. Ethnic Chinese are not alone in this conclusion. One of China’s leading universities, Beijing Normal University, saw a 65% spike in international student admissions between 2001 and 2005.<sup>185</sup> Almost two decades after the 1989 tragedy in Tiananmen Square, Chinese students are ready to face the reality of China’s rise and return home as the heroes China has always advertised them to be. As they go, the lobbying power built up since 1989 fades with them, closing what may be the most influential period on American politics and Sino-American relations in the history of Chinese student exchange.

This chapter covers the restart of educational exchange and its effect on Sino-American relations. It begins with normalization of U.S.-PRC diplomatic relations and a focus on the genesis of the “brain drain” of Chinese students and scholars to the United States. Also emphasized in the first section is the importance with which both nations held

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<sup>185</sup> Wang Yingjie, “Working With U.S. Higher Education: A Chinese Perspective,” in *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: Perspectives on a Growing Partnership*, ed. Shepherd Laughlin (New York: AIFS Foundation and Institute of International Education: 2008), 104.

the exchange. The chapter reaches its midpoint with the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the powerful Chinese student movement in America created in its wake. This movement deserves special attention; it is perhaps the most effective example of Chinese students directly and actively influencing Sino-American relations. The chapter closes with a brief analysis of the brain drain and its sudden reversal since 2000.

Excitement soared over the renewal of official educational exchange with mainland China after normalization on January 1, 1979. But it wasn't just official government-sponsored education that thrived under the new regulations. Cien Wu and Liu Ming, two twenty-five year olds from China's "intellectual class," attended Westchester Community College in New York with the private sponsorship of their Chinese-American uncle, Mr. Tien Y. Yang. According to Yang, "The Government just lets them go. The door is quite open now."<sup>186</sup> The door was propped open by perhaps the most influential political leader in China at the time, Deng Xiaoping. His family notably took the lead in study abroad when one of his sons, Deng Zhifang, enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Rochester in New York.<sup>187</sup> Other high-level party officials also took the opportunity to send their children and occasionally spouses to the United States specifically for study, just another indication of the importance China attached to American education and its place in U.S.-China Relations. China demanded technical expertise, regardless of political affiliation; in a typical group of thirty-one students, for example, only two were members of the Chinese Communist Party.

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<sup>186</sup> Edward Hudson, "Two from China Begin College Life," *The New York Times*, Sep 2, 1979, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>187</sup> Fox Butterfield, "Deng's Son Is Coming to Rochester for Graduate Training in Physics," *The New York Times*, Jan 18, 1980, <http://www.proquest.com>.

By the end of 1981, 6,500 students had already entered over 160 American universities and colleges.<sup>188</sup>

Chinese students carried a veritable cornucopia of American values and lessons home with them where American officials hoped they would “spread their perceptions of American life” and effectively de-mythologize the West.<sup>189</sup> Chinese were shocked by the materialism of the United States, evident in shopping malls and Hollywood films.<sup>190</sup> Other Chinese noted the differences in racial bias and American attitudes from the demonized versions they were repeatedly exposed to by CCP propaganda for years.<sup>191</sup> While 85% of Chinese students entered the fields of science and engineering, others grappled with the new and frustratingly different concepts in capitalism through business and economics courses. The U.S. Department of Commerce even sponsored a program sending American teachers to the Dalian Institute of Technology in China to instruct factory managers in the principles and applications of capitalism.<sup>192</sup> Business courses were common for American-educated Chinese as well; educators at Wellesley College in Massachusetts said they “first had to reintroduce their students to an old concept—profit.”<sup>193</sup> Chinese students returned to China not only influenced by America’s culture but by its capitalism as well. This served them well when China truly began to filter capitalism into Chinese society; beginning in 1985, students in

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<sup>188</sup> Jan Wong, “China’s Leap To American Campuses,” *The New York Times*, Nov 15, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>189</sup> David Holley, “Chinese Scholars Learn U.S. Ways,” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar 14, 1982, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>190</sup> Qian, 68.

<sup>191</sup> Holley.

<sup>192</sup> Christopher S. Wren, “Chinese Study Capitalist Lessons,” *The New York Times*, Jun 27, 1982, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>193</sup> Fred Bayles, “New Concept: Chinese Learning How to Profit From Wheeling, Dealing,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1983, <http://www.proquest.com>.



China no longer received automatic free tuition.<sup>194</sup> Because these American-educated Chinese students had been exposed to market capitalism, they were able to serve as examples to the rest of the Chinese populace as reforms began.

The renewal of educational exchange excited Americans in the 1980s, but the past was neither forgotten nor communism forgiven. The Cold War, while winding down, had not yet ended, and American intelligence agencies still feared that Chinese students in the U.S. might actually be a front for a complicated spy operation. For years after 1979, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents made the rounds to American campuses where Chinese students were enrolled, quietly pressing for information. An FBI agent interviewed one Wisconsin teacher in mid-1979, asking if she thought it was not “a little dangerous to have so many Chinese communists on campus?”<sup>195</sup> Her negative response seems an accurate reflection of contemporary public opinion which had swung firmly in favor of China. At least one letter to the editor complained that such thoughts and actions “have a withering effect on the still fragile flowers of Sino-American friendship” and might even cause Chinese intelligence to “tighten the screws” on Americans abroad.<sup>196</sup> It is notable, however, that unconditional support for China was by no means unanimous; the former FBI chief of the Chinese Unit and author of the investigative guidelines in use responded to the accusations of recklessness by assuring readers, “It would be arrogant to assume every Chinese student is a

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<sup>194</sup> Jim Mann, “China Preparing to Make University Students Pay Some Tuition,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1985, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>195</sup> Jay Mathews, “FBI Quietly Checking on Chinese Students at American Campuses,” *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>196</sup> John Israel, “Informants on Campus,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 3, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

spy. It would also be arrogant not to recognize that classified scientific and technological data are up for grabs by many foreign powers.”<sup>197</sup>

The FBI was not alone in its counter-intelligence work; the Central Intelligence Agency also sprang into action in 1981 following an executive order from President Ronald Reagan which allowed domestic investigations so long as they investigated foreign citizens. In contrast to the FBI, the CIA actually worked through college-age classmates of Chinese students.<sup>198</sup> Both agencies countered concerns with claims that not only were they protecting the security of Americans and the integrity of American industry, they were also preparing for potential defections.<sup>199</sup> While a State Department official indicated such activities were typical, the fact that the agencies’ fervor was caught by the press leads to the conclusion that the American government was not only eager but expectant of multiple high-profile defections of Chinese students and scholars.

Requests for political asylum were not uncommon for the U.S. during the Cold War, but the instances connected with Chinese students display a certain adversarial nature underneath the façade of friendly educational exchanges. Once more students were being used as political tools by the U.S. government to send messages to the communist government in Beijing. The defections in the U.S. and spy games on both sides made educational exchange between the two nations especially tense. Wang Bingzhang, a Chinese physician claiming to be the first communist Chinese student to get his Ph.D. in North

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<sup>197</sup> Gerald B. Nolan, “On the FBI’s Guidelines for Chinese Students,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 19, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>198</sup> Jack Anderson, “CIA Returns to Campus Spying,” *The Washington Post*, Oct 12, 1984, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>199</sup> Jay Mathews, “FBI Quietly Checking on Chinese Students at American Campuses,” *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

America, defected in 1982 to write a human rights journal.<sup>200</sup> Wang's journal, *China Spring*, became the first Chinese pro-democracy magazine overseas, and his defection and subsequent activities caused China so much embarrassment that he was abducted and arrested over twenty years later in Vietnam – he is still being held in a Chinese prison.<sup>201</sup> China treated defections extremely seriously, as shown by the closure of an entire private dance exchange program when one of the dancers married an American in Texas.<sup>202</sup> After the Reagan administration granted political asylum to nineteen-year-old Chinese tennis player Hu Na, the PRC canceled all its cultural and athletic exchanges for seven months in 1983.<sup>203</sup>

Originally Beijing seemed to accept a certain number of defections, understanding that some students had few ties to China, but as the defections became more widely reported, China began to lose face. Though the publicity of Hu Na's defection and Wang's democratic efforts embarrassed China, the nation's concern was based on a growing trend. At least one article chalked up the supposed "brain drain" of Chinese students and scholars to large numbers of cultural defections.<sup>204</sup> Another cited the repeated extensions of five-year visas requested by Chinese students, insisting that many doctorate programs take as many as seven years to complete.<sup>205</sup> In fear of the brain drain, China began restricting travel and study

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<sup>200</sup> Richard Bernstein, "Student from China defects to Establish New Rights Journal," *The New York Times*, Nov 18, 1982, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>201</sup> Amnesty International, "China: Further information on Possible disappearance/Incommunicado detention/Fear for safety," *Amnesty International*, <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA170132003?open&of=ENG-CHN>.

<sup>202</sup> James P. Sterba, "China and U.S. Sign Pact on Cultural Exchanges," *The New York Times*, Sep 6, 1981, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>203</sup> Michael Parks, "China Cancels U.S. Cultural, Sports Exchange," *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 8, 1983, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>204</sup> Michael Weisskopf, "Rash of Cultural Defectors Exit by China's 'Open Door'," *The Washington Post*, Aug 20, 1982, <http://www.proquest.com>.

abroad as early as 1980 for professors and other intellectuals.<sup>206</sup> In April 1982, the Chinese government passed an unpublished regulation outlawing the children of Communist party leaders from studying abroad apparently attempting to prevent conflicts of interest as well as any embarrassment should a leader's child defect. It also hindered the development of private exchange programs.<sup>207</sup> By 1988, the crackdown had continued further. Despite Chinese officials' insistence that no aspects of the educational exchange had changed, a document acquired by students suggested otherwise. The government began telling students to come home earlier, and visas for outgoing students were shortened to the point where many students claimed it would be impossible to finish a Ph.D.<sup>208</sup>

Many of the concerns and heavy regulations stemmed from a fear of "westernization." One anonymous Chinese student called the brain drain a "smokescreen for an underlying concern that students will become contaminated by American democratic values."<sup>209</sup> This sort of concern appears familiar not only to the historian, but it also struck a nerve with the public; one letter to the editor compared these fears to the recall of the Chinese Educational Mission in the early 1880s.<sup>210</sup> Circumstances had changed greatly since then, but the basics remained the same. As for actual student reasoning behind the brain

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<sup>205</sup> *The New York Times*, "China's Phantom Brain Drain," May 5, 1988, <http://www.proquest.com>. The article was written by an American-educated Chinese student wishing to remain anonymous.

<sup>206</sup> Jay Mathews, "China Restricts Scholars' Travel to Halt Brain Drain to U.S.," *The Washington Post*, Jul 7, 1980, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>207</sup> Weisskopf.

<sup>208</sup> Dennis Hevesi, "China Policy Shift on Study Overseas," *The New York Times*, Apr 4, 1988, <http://www.proquest.com>. Masters degree students were limited to one and two years, Ph.D. students who already had bachelor's degrees were limited to five years, and students with a master's degree seeking a Ph.D. were limited to four years. Five years was the upper limit.

<sup>209</sup> *The New York Times*, "China's Phantom Brain Drain."

<sup>210</sup> Timothy T. Kao, "China Always Fears for Students Abroad," *The New York Times*, Apr 11, 1988, <http://www.proquest.com>.

drain, many possible answers arose. One argument pointed to the “contradictory goals” of the Communist Party, once more pitting “red” against “expert.”<sup>211</sup> Students who did return often faced a scarcity of jobs, mediocre equipment, and constant government meddling in any research.<sup>212</sup> All of this led to what China’s leaders called a “crisis of confidence” amongst Chinese youth.<sup>213</sup> Their experience of central heating, American materialism, and unfiltered educations led many to stay rather than attempt to change policies where they felt unwanted at home. Of the two Open Door policies affiliated with the Middle Kingdom, one let foreign nations into China, the other let Chinese students out.

“If the Chinese have to pay a price for all this, it will come later,” stated Jay Mathews of the *Los Angeles Times*; “[t]hey may find the notions of political and social freedom brought back by exchange students too difficult to swallow.”<sup>214</sup> As political protests increased in China especially in the second half of the 1980s, Mathews’ comment seemed prophetic. The protests began in 1979 alongside normalization with the advent of the Democracy Wall – a wall in Beijing where activists hung political posters and clamored for democracy. Shortly after Deng Xiaoping’s trip to the United States, the movement was put down.<sup>215</sup> Despite the defections and tensions between the two nations, protests did not begin again in earnest until 1984 when students in Beijing took to the streets – over a lights-out

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<sup>211</sup> *The New York Times*, “How Not to Stop China’s Brain Drain,” Apr 13, 1988, <http://www.proquest.com>. See note 149.

<sup>212</sup> Amanda Bennett, “Learning Blocks: China Seems to Make Poor Use of Scientists Who Studied Abroad,” *Wall Street Journal*, Jul 6, 1984, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>213</sup> Daniel Southerland, “Poll Shows Chinese Students Seek Better Living Standards,” *The Washington Post*, Apr 13, 1985, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>214</sup> Jay Mathews, “The Flap Over Hu Na: Simply a Passing Shot,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 10, 1983, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>215</sup> James Mann, *About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 102.

policy on campuses. In 1985, students attempted a protest more palatable to Chinese leaders – criticisms of the student treatment in the form of anti-Japanese sentiments.<sup>216</sup> On December 9, 1985, students canceled a major protest and instead “mixed anti-Japanese slogans with protests against rising prices and corruption.”<sup>217</sup> By 1986, protests “openly embraced Western political ideals.”<sup>218</sup> To students and the American press, the Chinese government even appeared to be listening. It allowed and even hesitantly encouraged discussions of freedom and democracy, even hosting a symposium in Beijing on China’s political structure.<sup>219</sup> However, much like the Hundred Flowers Campaign thirty years earlier, this short period of discussion and reform ended in crackdowns on dissent and a reshuffling of political leadership.

In January, 1987, the Chinese Politburo booted party secretary Hu Yaobang as Deng’s second-in-command due to his willingness to support political liberalization.<sup>220</sup> His ouster immediately made Hu a rallying symbol for students both in China and the United States. Hu Yaobang’s dismissal snapped Chinese students in America into action. Representatives of Chinese students and scholars in the United States drafted a statement declaring the party’s decision “a fundamental blow against the modernization program and a sharp blow against the Chinese intelligentsia,” who viewed Hu as an important advocate.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 156.

<sup>217</sup> *The New York Times*, “Students in Peking Protest Army Presence on Campus,” Dec 20, 1985, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>218</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 157.

<sup>219</sup> Jim Mann, “Talk of Political Reform Begins to Flower in China,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jun 23, 1986, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>220</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 158.

<sup>221</sup> John F. Burns, “Chinese in U.S. Draft Protest of Ouster,” *The New York Times*, Jan 19, 1987, <http://www.proquest.com>.

By January 20, 1987, 1,000 students had endorsed the open letter to the Communist party – remarkably, many confirmed they used their real names.<sup>222</sup> Said one student when reminded of his country’s Cultural Revolution, “But we are being critical of our Government in a constructive way. What the Government is doing now isn’t rational.”<sup>223</sup> Indeed, their activism didn’t end with one open letter. After Yang Wei, an American-educated Chinese student was arrested at his parents’ home in China, Chinese students in the U.S. followed the case and sent a petition addressed to former Chinese premier and the new party secretary (replacing Hu Yaobang), Zhao Ziyang, noting the government’s breach of law in holding Yang without trial, as well as requesting permission to speak without fear of retribution when Yang’s trial was eventually held.<sup>224</sup> It is apparent from these activities that by 1987 Chinese students abroad were engaged as they had not been since the 1920s.

Chinese students were mostly quiet during 1988, but the unexpected death of Hu Yaobang on April 15, 1989 shook them from their temporary slumber. Students marched to Tiananmen Square to pay their respects, but – as in 1976 at the death of Zhou Enlai – mourning soon gave way to protest. Demonstrations continued in Tiananmen and quickly spread to other cities in the weeks that followed.<sup>225</sup> Students had originally planned to protest on May 4, 1989 to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919, but Hu’s death gave the protest depth and momentum, signaling a direct refutation of

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<sup>222</sup> Douglas Martin, “1,000 Chinese in U.S. Endorse a Protest,” *The New York Times*, Jan 20, 1987, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>223</sup> Nick Ravo, “Chinese Students Defend Open Letter,” *The New York Times*, Jan 26, 1987, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>224</sup> Wolfgang Saxon, “Chinese Students Across U.S. Protest an Arrest in Shanghai,” *The New York Times*, Dec 21, 1987, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>225</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 184.

government policies given Hu's ouster two years earlier.<sup>226</sup> However, Chinese leaders were unwilling to allow the protests to continue and potentially embarrass them in the face of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's upcoming state visit in mid-May. By April 28, government leaders had promised an open discussion with the demonstrators, and the students declared a premature victory, stating "the democratic era in China starts from today,"<sup>227</sup> as the crowds in Tiananmen increased in size and diversity. Only two days later, student leaders denounced the negotiations as "a ruse" and insisted the government was only "buying time."<sup>228</sup> The twin embarrassments of protests during Gorbachev's May 15 visit and the U.S. Navy visit on May 19 led China to declare martial law on May 20.<sup>229</sup> U.S. Ambassador James Lilley remained in China rather than return to the States for a meeting, leaning on his belief that China was "coming unstuck."<sup>230</sup>

Protest efforts continued to swell amongst Chinese students in America as well. On January 9, Yang Wei was released after almost two years to the day of incarceration. The Chinese students in the United States were emboldened by this success; their lobbying efforts had influenced the American Congress to pass a joint resolution demanding Yang's release

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<sup>226</sup> Daniel Southerland, "Chinese Students Seek to Uphold Protest Tradition," *The Washington Post*, Apr 22, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>227</sup> Adi Ignatius, "Chinese Students Win Concession After a Massive March in Beijing," *The Wall Street Journal*, Apr 28, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>228</sup> Daniel Southerland, "China Talks Called Ruse By Students," *The Washington Post*, Apr 30, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>229</sup> Relations between China and the Soviet Union had gradually improved during the 1980s. Gorbachev's meeting was intended to be a high-level summit regarding the future of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Instead, on May 13, two days before Gorbachev's arrival, some students in Tiananmen began a highly publicized hunger strike which attracted even more attention to the protest. The United States, afraid of a renewal of friendly ties between China and the Soviet Union, planned to frustrate negotiations by sailing three ships of the U.S. Navy up the Huangpu River in Shanghai. However, much like the crowds everywhere Gorbachev visited in China, protestors surrounded the navy ships on either bank, vilifying the Chinese leadership and dulling the effect of the American stunt.

<sup>230</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 186-88.



and pressured China to release him.<sup>231</sup> Just as crowds gathered in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, Chinese students and residents in America gathered in the small town of Bolinas, California to discuss the movement at home and the memory of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement in 1919. Participants questioned China's identity and noted the May 4<sup>th</sup> call for "democracy and science" – two values prominent in the 1989 movement as well.<sup>232</sup> On May 20, the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars organized a protest outside the Chinese embassy in the District of Columbia.<sup>233</sup> Chicago and Washington, D.C. each saw 3,000 demonstrators, largely students, marching and chanting outside the Chinese consulate and embassy respectively; another 1,000 gathered outside the Chinese consulate in San Francisco with still more in Manhattan.<sup>234</sup> Support for the protestors among the American-educated Chinese community appeared overwhelming. That support mixed with grim dread as troops stirred within Beijing. However, Chinese students in the U.S. remained steadfast in their support even as troops closed in on their counterparts in Beijing, as one example shows. When an urgent call for garbage bags for the protestors came up on the rudimentary internet of the times,<sup>235</sup> Chinese students on two separate campuses within the University of California system along with Stanford University banded together to purchase 1,800 bags at a

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<sup>231</sup> Daniel Southerland, "China Frees Dissident Jailed 2 Years," *The Washington Post*, Jan 10, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>232</sup> Richard Bernstein, "Dissident Chinese Gather in the West," *The New York Times*, May 3, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>233</sup> Evelyn Hsu, "Chinese Americans, Students React With Pride, Concern to Protests," *The Washington Post*, May 20, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>234</sup> Robert D. McFadden, "Thousands of Chinese Rally in the U.S.," *The New York Times*, May 21, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>235</sup> This network mostly connected corporations, universities, and research centers in the late 1980s and was still in a beta form.

local discount store, then sent them along with pairs of walkie-talkies via a “trusted courier” on May 25.<sup>236</sup>

Just over a week later, the massacre began. On the night of June 3 in Beijing, the People’s Liberation Army commenced their assault on Beijing from all directions, shooting civilians on their route to the Square. As many as 2,700 demonstrators were killed in the attacks which carried over into June 4. Before Tiananmen, Americans had viewed China as “steadily reforming” due to the “carefully nurtured” relationship – largely through the American education of Chinese students. During the massacre, however, American television stations broadcast images of the massacre back to the United States, and Americans were forced to realize the tyrannical nature of their “friends” in Asia. Reporters covered the crackdown in Beijing extensively, and reports produced some of the most enduring pictures of hardship, chaos, and repression in the history of China.<sup>237</sup> Americans had been led – by leaders in China and the White House in the U.S. – to believe that the PRC was changing; the crackdown was like a slap in the face.

If the scenes from Tiananmen Square shocked Americans, they horrified Chinese studying in the United States. Many students anxiously awaited news about loved ones at home; others were busy using fax machines to send American newspaper articles on the tragedy home to clueless relatives as censorship swept across China.<sup>238</sup> Students compared their leaders to Hitler and called Prime Minister Li Peng a murderer.<sup>239</sup> The day after the

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<sup>236</sup> Katherine Bishop, “China Exchange: From Gossip to Trash Bags,” *The New York Times*, May 28, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>237</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 191-92.

<sup>238</sup> Marianne Yen, “Across U.S., a Frantic Hunt for News,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 6, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

massacre, Chinese students in the U.S. wrote a letter to American President George H.W. Bush decrying China as “an evil fascist dictatorship.” Pei Mei Xin, a graduate student at Harvard, called the attack an atrocity and said, “Never before in Chinese history has the army killed peaceful students.”<sup>240</sup> The statement is dubious, but the level of outrage and disgust is clear. But the Chinese students were not just furious, they were also well-organized.

Largely because of the steady support for the movement in Beijing prior to the crackdown, American-educated students already had a detailed organization set in place. With roughly 40,000 Chinese students in America and countless more Chinese-Americans, the students quickly realized such numbers could become a powerful force in American politics.<sup>241</sup> Before the events of June 4 transpired, Chinese students were already writing Congress with detailed suggestions on how to help democratize China by helping students already in the United States prolong their stays.<sup>242</sup> Immediately following the news of the crackdown, students marched outside the Capitol – where they were met by senators of both parties – and outside the White House – where they were joined by civil rights activist Jesse Jackson. Many students had technical expertise, and they maintained an online forum called CHINANET to plan an agenda. The agenda soon came to include economic sanctions on China, boycotting the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, and legislation to protect Chinese

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<sup>239</sup> Robert D. McFadden, “The West Condemns the Crackdown,” *New York Times*, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1989, sec. A, <http://www.proquest.com>. Li Peng rose to the standing committee of the Politburo and served as acting premier beginning in 1987 after the ouster of Hu Yaobang. Politically orthodox, Li insisted that the rapid progress of reform under General Secretary Zhao Ziyang had been a mistake, and, though a reformer, he wanted to focus more on social stability than economic reform. His commitment to social stability made him a key voice for martial law and the face of the hardliners who ordered the crackdown on the student protests.

<sup>240</sup> Fox Butterfield, “For Students in U.S., Grief and Fury,” *The New York Times*, Jun 5, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>241</sup> Jay Mathews, “Chinese Are No. 1 Group of Foreign Students Here,” *The Washington Post*, May 2, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>242</sup> *The New York Times*, “How Congress Can Help Change China,” Jun 2, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>. The author’s name was withheld, but it was noted that he/she had close family in China.

students in America.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, on July 30, 1989, students founded The Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars at the First Chinese Students Congress.<sup>244</sup>

The new lobbyists rode a wave of public and congressional sentiment over the next several years. In an extreme example, some New Yorkers called a special criminal report line in Beijing set up to catch the student leaders from Tiananmen; when asked to report a criminal, they responded, “Deng Xiaoping.”<sup>245</sup> When President Bush released his original executive order offering students the opportunity to extend their stay by a year, only three students accepted it due to a catch forcing them to return immediately after the year was up. Wu’er Kaixi and Yan Jiaqi, two student leaders in the Tiananmen Square protests, originally acted as the public faces of the movement, but Zhao Haiqing, a biochemistry graduate student from Harvard, eclipsed them as spokesman, organizer, and lobbyist. Zhao cleverly ignored a bill proposing permanent residence he realized was too extreme and instead threw his support and that of his fellow students behind a more moderate bill to temporarily suspend the requirement to return home – a bill proposed by a relatively fresh political face from San Francisco, California, Representative Nancy Pelosi (D). The students also enlisted the support of another rising star in the Democratic Party, George Stephanopoulos – then an aide to House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D) and future consultant to President William Clinton.

The students accomplished a great deal with the power they wielded after Tiananmen. Pelosi’s bill easily passed both houses. When President Bush vetoed the bill to show Chinese

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<sup>243</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 200-201.

<sup>244</sup> The Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars, *The Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars*, <http://www.ifcss.org/info/>.

<sup>245</sup> Michael T. Kaufman, “New Yorkers Try to Defend Students Hunted in China,” *The New York Times*, Jun 22, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com>.

leaders he would not abandon their nation, he immediately issued an executive order granting the same privileges as the bill. The students pushed for Congress to override the president's veto anyway to show how little the nation supported Bush's policies; the override passed in the House but failed by only four votes in the Senate. Representative Pelosi had taken notice of the publicity her bill garnered and immediately shifted focus with the students to economic sanctions on China and the implementation of human rights checks on Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) trading status. The administration managed to tie in the American radio station Voice of America, and Senator Joe Biden (D-Delaware) insisted that China curb arms proliferation. With Pelosi's assurance, the students accepted these compromises, and subsequently MFN was nominally tied to human rights.<sup>246</sup> Though the White House never canceled MFN, the bill's success marked a high point in the influence of Chinese students on American politics and US policy toward China.

Attention remained on China throughout the 1992 presidential campaign. Democratic presidential candidate and Governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton "courted" Zhao Haiqing's opinions on China policy. Clinton targeted Bush's "coddling" of the "butchers of Beijing" as despicable.<sup>247</sup> Nancy Pelosi took the opportunity of the presidential campaign to push through a bill granting Chinese students already in America between June 5, 1989 and April 11, 1990 permanent residency in the United States. Pelosi's bill was called the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992. By the one-year deadline, over 57,000 Chinese students had applied for residency. The lobbyist movement had been a resounding success, but China once again faced the pressure of a brain drain. China protested the act, citing a near-perfect record

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<sup>246</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 211-15, 229-32.

<sup>247</sup> Mann, *About Face*, 260-66.

on human rights with regard to American-educated Chinese since 1992, facts the State Department corroborated.<sup>248</sup>

By the mid-1990s, however, students' reasons for remaining in the United States no longer revolved around Tiananmen. Rather, much like the years prior to the crackdown, students simply saw no future in China. China's housing shortages, for instance, struck potential returnees as too great a factor. Lack of communication with the West and a steep learning curve also affected students' decisions. One student claimed that when he went abroad a second time after a prolonged stay in China, "he could hardly talk to his former teachers and classmates because he had never heard of the topics of their research."<sup>249</sup> Filial piety even played into the brain drain. Many parents remembered the backlash against intellectuals in the 1950s and begged their children to stay in the United States where they could find steady jobs, appreciation, and even occasional extra funds to send back to China.<sup>250</sup> As many of the American-educated Chinese students became successful scientists and businessmen, the brain drain appeared to be costing China not only talent, but money and prestige as well.

While the People's Republic of China was struggling to fix their brain drain, the Republic of China on Taiwan had already begun fixing their own. According to David Zweig, author and director of the Center on China's Transnational Relations, "The Nationalist government...offered subsidies for travel, help in job placement and assistance in business investment."<sup>251</sup> Perhaps most importantly, Taiwan had become a full-fledged

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<sup>248</sup> Qian, 193-94.

<sup>249</sup> Qian, 202-03.

<sup>250</sup> Zweig, 46-47.

<sup>251</sup> Zweig, 75.

democracy. By the late 1980s, Taiwan had legalized political parties other than the Guomindang, and in 1996, Taiwan began operating as a democracy with the direct popular elections of representatives to the National Assembly as well as the President and Vice President.<sup>252</sup> Taiwan even worked the angle of American education into its relations with the United States when Taiwanese lobbyists influenced Congressional legislation to secure President Lee Teng-hui<sup>253</sup> a visa to visit his alma mater at Cornell in June 1995 over the objections of the White House.<sup>254</sup> This move infuriated the People's Republic of China, which had been assured by the State Department that no such visit would be allowed. However, the visit also inadvertently helped stir patriotic fervor amongst Chinese students in the United States. During Lee's visit, approximately 200 pro-China protestors demonstrated on Cornell's campus.<sup>255</sup>

The NATO<sup>256</sup>/U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and the U.S. spy plane's collision with a Chinese aircraft over Chinese airspace in 2001 also raised the patriotic ire of Chinese students in the United States. Students began to develop a stronger nationalistic attachment to China; this was helped of course, by China's rapid

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<sup>252</sup> Roy, 183, 194.

<sup>253</sup> Lee Teng-hui was born on the island of Taiwan on January 15, 1923 and received his early education under Japanese colonial rule. After earning a bachelor's degree from Kyoto Imperial University in Japan in 1946 and a second bachelor's degree from National Taiwan University in 1948, he studied in the United States. He earned a master's degree from Iowa State University in 1953, and a PhD in agricultural economics from Cornell University in 1968. Despite participating in the 228 Incident (see page 60) in his youth, Lee joined the GMD and rose to the Vice Presidency through his skills as a technocrat. Lee then succeeded Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, as President in 1988. He became the first democratically elected President of Taiwan in 1996.

<sup>254</sup> Roy, 196-97.

<sup>255</sup> David W. Chen, "Taiwan's President Tiptoes Around Politics at Cornell," *The New York Times*, Jun 10, 1995.

<sup>256</sup> NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization was a military alliance formed by the Western powers in opposition to communism following World War II.

economic advancement. In the early 2000s, China began copying Taiwan's actions to entice international students to return. In a complete reversal of historical trends, no-interest business loans and tax cuts coaxed Chinese graduated students and immigrants in the United States away from their homes and families.<sup>257</sup> The booming economy and attractive risks have also drawn Chinese students and professionals – known in China as *hai gui*, or “sea turtles”<sup>258</sup> – back to China.

The pay is still relatively low, but academic freedom is wider than ever before in China; one professor at Tsinghua University says, “I’ve designed my own courses [here] with no constraints” including one on democratic theory.<sup>259</sup> Research, Chinese scientists and graduate students claim, is actually less constricted in China than in the United States. After American President George W. Bush’s executive order banning the use of stem cells in research in August 2001, scientists poured into China where such research was and still is actually encouraged. *The Washington Post* reported in February, 2008 that “as...U.S. research institutes complain about the tightening...in the nation’s scientific budget, China has announced that it will double its research-and-development spending by 2010, to about \$69 billion.”<sup>260</sup> The recent recession in the United States opened the financial markets to this “reverse brain drain” as well, and China pounced. After heavy losses in the financial sector in New York, Chinese financial institutions held recruiting sessions in New York and Chicago

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<sup>257</sup> Jun Wang, “The Return of the ‘Sea Turtles’: Reverse Brain Drain to China,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct 1, 2005.

<sup>258</sup> Wang. The word for turtle sounds similar to the word for “to come home,” and such a play on words is typical to the Chinese language.

<sup>259</sup> Mary Hennock, “The Big Brains Are Back,” *Newsweek*, Aug 9, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com>.

<sup>260</sup> Ariana Eunjung Cha, “Opportunities in China Lure Scientists Home,” *The Washington Post*, February 20, 2008.



to “diversify and upgrade their own staffs.”<sup>261</sup> In fact, whereas a quarter of all Chinese students before 2004 remained in the United States, in the current environment only ten percent plan to stay. Only seven percent “believe that the best days of the U.S. economy lie ahead.”<sup>262</sup>

China’s extreme involvement in the U.S. economy as the holder of the largest portion of American debt totaling nearly two trillion dollars, and the reverse brain drain of Chinese along with a trickle of American students could signal a major shift in Sino-American Relations. In 1979, China had everything to gain from normalization. America was quite literally the land of opportunity for Chinese students – most refused ever to return to their homelands. As they had for roughly a hundred years, Americans believed they held China’s future in their hands in the form of impressionable Chinese youth. Chinese students also stepped up during the fourth generation of students after the tragedy at Tiananmen Square, forming the most influential organization of Chinese students in America’s history with direct effects on the United States’ China policy and its government; Nancy Pelosi ascended to the position of Speaker of the House in 2006. The importance of education and the control of youth have been made abundantly clear through student movements and economic pressure. In the wake of Beijing’s successful hosting of the Olympics in the summer of 2008 and America’s recession-plagued economy, U.S.-China educational exchange is quickly shifting in China’s favor. If the story of Chinese students is any clue, shifts in diplomacy are soon to follow.

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<sup>261</sup> Jimmy Wang, “China’s Financial Industry Recruits Abroad,” *The New York Times*, Dec 25, 2008.

<sup>262</sup> Vivek Wadhwa, “Is the U.S. Experiencing its First Brain Drain?,” *New American Media*, Mar 31, 2009, [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=523974488fd2dc12ca8c175f55fe5bbf](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=523974488fd2dc12ca8c175f55fe5bbf).

## **Conclusion**

The history of China's American-educated students forms a crucial component of the history of U.S.-China relations. Until recently, it has rested on the foundation of American superiority – the belief that America could help improve China through spreading not only technology but democratic American values as well. During the nineteenth century, those values also included Christianization, and educational exchange was often championed in America by missionaries and in China by Christian converts. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Americans took pride in students like Hu Shi and V.K. Wellington Koo, who contributed to the genesis of a new, ostensibly more republican China. During the Cold War, Americans relished their role as protectors of the stranded third generation of Chinese students, and in 1979 the United States once more welcomed Chinese students to American shores with the promise of democracy and science.

As this thesis strives to illustrate, it is necessary to look at the whole picture of China's students' forays in American education to understand the full impact they have had on relations between the two nations. Since the early 1900s, trends are visible of Chinese student organizations petitioning the U.S. government with increasing success. Chinese students also presented Americans with an image of driven intellectuals during the second generation and diehard democrats during the fourth generation – uniquely altering popular perceptions of China as a whole. This was especially true for students opposed to communism both in the decade after the founding of the PRC in 1949 and again in 1989 and the years immediately following; Americans took student dislike for the communist regime to represent general popular dissent. The complete history of American-educated Chinese students also bears witness to China's perpetual fear of westernization. Only in recent years

has this fear subsided, but China has exchanged ideological loyalty for fierce patriotism, and it has done so successfully.

Due to the broad nature of the research, several conclusions suggest new questions and fields of research yet to review. As Chinese students return to China in droves either to escape economic crisis or dive into heady risks, the question remains as to the real amount of democratic values American universities have managed to instill in these “sea turtles.” American politicians have insisted since 1979 that trade and economic modernization naturally lead to democratization, but such efforts rely on a trained elite. Has America produced such an elite group for China? This historical narrative also opens itself up naturally to comparisons with other educational exchanges involving Europe or perhaps most noticeably India. This other Asian giant has also seen a stunning reverse brain drain in recent years.<sup>263</sup>

Regardless of the influx of returned students to China, the U.S.-China educational exchange system is stronger now than ever before as China’s universities become more open. Chapter 4 ended on a bleak note for Americans, emphasizing the results of the deepening recession and the loss of many Chinese experts trained in the United States. However, China’s universities have opened up more than ever, and despite repression of minorities, China’s censorship laws are rapidly falling away under worldwide scrutiny. China is now ranked as a popular destination country for international students, behind only Germany, France, the UK, and the United States.<sup>264</sup> With the history of American-educated Chinese students as a blueprint, promising developments in China may not lie beyond expectations.

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<sup>263</sup> Wadhwa.

<sup>264</sup> Laughlin, 2.

## **Bibliographical Essay**

The history of American-educated Chinese students spans more than 150 years of U.S.-China relations history, encompassing an epic period of diplomatic relations beginning with the missionary movement of the 1830s and continuing to the present. The evolution of the study of U.S.-China educational exchange was first discussed in the introduction. This bibliographical essay seeks to provide sources for further research and context for the educational exchange as well as explain the choices in source material made for this specific study.

Today Chinese student organizations are commonplace in U.S. colleges and universities, their development and impact on the politics in China and America, as well as the diplomacy between the two nations, peaked in the early 1990s and their power has since waned. The brain drain of Chinese students and intellectuals is reversing, pulling the same students and intellectuals – as well as Americans – towards China for studies, employment, and research. Given the influence Chinese students and returned scholars have had on the relations between the United States and China in the past, the study of the trends alongside the history of U.S.-China relations in this thesis is especially timely as increasing numbers of Chinese students forsake America for home in China.

For this study, I drew on both primary and secondary sources. Without a firm command of traditional Chinese characters, personal accounts from Chinese students were both difficult to obtain and highly impractical to use. Also out of reach were collegiate archives at the University of California, Yale University, and the University of Michigan – institutions attended by several important groups of Chinese students. However, primary sources were still available in the form of a few personal accounts. Some quotations from the *Chinese Students' Monthly* (published 1906-1931) are available through Stacey Bieler's "*Patriots" or "Traitors"?: A History of American Educated Chinese Students* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003). Yung Wing's

autobiography, *My Life in China and America* (1909; North Stratford, New Hampshire: Ayer Co. Publishers, Inc, 2000) is the best personal account in English of this student pioneer's life and struggles during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Yung Wing's account covers his early years in Hong Kong fairly well, but the period in which he studied in America is glossed over, giving much more attention to contacts he made in the U.S. Where his autobiography shines is in its treatment of the genesis of the Chinese Educational Mission. In any study of the first generation of Chinese scholars, this book is irreplaceable.

A focus on the impact of Chinese students on American politics and diplomacy in regards to China also lent itself to another primary source: American newspapers. For searches through the historical archives, I used the online database Proquest and its four available newspapers: *The Wall Street Journal* (1889-1991), *Los Angeles Times* (1881-1996), *Washington Post* (1877-1992), and *The New York Times* (1851-2005). A focus on four major national newspapers, each with their own regional specialties, offers a glimpse at media attention historically as well as a reflection of public opinion and perception. At least one of the archives (*The New York Times*) reaches all the way back to the 1851; Yung Wing graduated from Yale University in 1854. The rest all start before the turn of the century. I drew on basic articles, analyses, and editorials for the completion of this narrative. The continuous use of newspaper articles also lends continuity to the narrative, following not only the history of Chinese students in America but the history of American views and biases involving these students. Almost ninety separate articles concerning educational exchange or the lives of Chinese students are included in the bibliography of this paper. Given that some, especially in the early 1900s, are no more than blurbs, it would prove unwieldy to review each individual article. During the most remarkable periods of educational exchange – the recall of the C.E.M., the stranded Chinese students after 1949, and the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square Massacre – several more articles were available; however, those listed were the most complete and helpful in learning student reaction and public opinion.

Also of use are certain websites. Amnesty International's website on human rights violations in Asia (<http://asiapacific.amnesty.org>) tracks many of the cases the Chinese student organizations in the United States still follow. Such cases can also be found at the website of the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS: <http://www.ifcss.org/home/>) in that organization's press releases. The website itself is now defunct; it has not been updated since March 17, 2008. However, information on the organization's manifesto and past activities remains available.

There are many articles being written currently on the "reverse brain drain" from the United States (and other nations) to China. However, the four most helpful in preparing this study were a piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* which explained the term "sea turtles" (Jun Wang, "The Return of the 'Sea Turtles': Reverse Brain Drain to China," Oct 1, 2005), a *Washington Post* article by journalist Ariana Eunjung Cha ("Opportunities in China Lure Scientists Home," February 20, 2008), an article in the weekly magazine *Newsweek* (Mary Hennock, "The Big Brains Are Back," Aug 9, 2008), and an online news blog called New American Media (Vivek Wadhwa "Is the U.S. Experiencing its First Brain Drain?" Mar 31, 2009). While Wadhwa's article offers a statistical breakdown of the reverse brain drain, the others listed offer further examination of the impact of returned scholars in China and the meaning of their loss to the United States.

The secondary literature on the subject still has several holes. Most coverage of U.S.-China educational exchange today is undertaken by major newspapers and independent institutions including the *New York Times* and the Institute of International Education, that fall outside of mainstream academia. Scholarly works are often highly specialized, limiting research to either contemporary politics or specific periods of history in the field. Chinese authors tend to focus more on societal and anthropological aspects of educational exchange, while American authors are inclined to study its history and politics. Nearly all of this literature, however,

addresses Chinese students as a group to be acted upon, rather than actors with influence and agendas.

Any study first requires a firm grounding in China's history. Renowned China historian Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China* (W.W. Norton, 2000) is the accepted traditional textbook for China's modern history – typically accepted as the period beginning with the fall of the Ming Dynasty in 1644. Historian Keith Schoppa's work in *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006) is less expansive, but it does offer a closer look at some of the people involved, setting its tone with a first chapter full of biographical sketches spanning the period of modern history. The only book necessary for a thorough study of Taiwanese history is political scientist Denny Roy's *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003). The book is an excellent source of historical context for Taiwan's actions during the Cold War and beyond, and it also provides a stellar background of Taiwan's history beyond the Ming era.

Less general literature on China's modern history is also available. Current literature on pioneering British missionary Robert Morrison is light at best, and typically subsumed into other works on the general effects of missionaries in China. For this study, the best information on Morrison was found in W.J. Townsend's 1888 biography of the missionary, *Robert Morrison: The Pioneer of Chinese Missions* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co.). Anne Thurston's work on the Cultural Revolution, like Schoppa's textbook, contrasts Jonathan Spence's writing by foregoing an epic historical narrative to focus instead on the consequences of Mao's plot on China's intellectual class, the *Enemies of the People* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1987) from which the book gets its title.

Readers looking for sources on U.S.-China relations have a wealth of literature to turn to. China's views on America since 1848 are provided through a series of short journal entries, letters, and other works ably translated and edited by David Arkush and Leo O. Lee in *Land*

*Without Ghosts* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989). Though its coverage ends before the bombshells in 1989, its historical value is without question, providing a glimpse at the views of both very important Chinese diplomats like Hu Shi and Chen Lanbin as well as the average Chinese traveler.

Andrew Gyory and Kitty Calavita both focus more on the American side of the Pacific in their works on the Chinese Exclusion Act. Gyory's book *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) is most notable for its conflicted study of the rationale behind the Act. The latter half of the book also gives context for Chinese people remaining in America. Calavita's journal article "The Paradoxes of Race, Class, Identity, and 'Passing': Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882-1910" (2000) in *Law & Social Enquiry* also provides historical and legal context for the passage of the Act, with an adept explanation of the methodical approach the American Congress took to treaty revision.

James Mann, a former columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, provides a thorough treatment of U.S.-China relations from President Richard Nixon's diplomatic efforts in the early 1970s through the Clinton administration. The latest edition of *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (2000; N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1998) also includes a new afterword reflecting on the final years of the Clinton administration and the rhetoric of the 2000 presidential campaign. The book contains excellent prose and detailed information on the post-1989 Chinese student movement in the United States. For further information on Nixon's visit and its effects on U.S.-China relations, Margaret MacMillan's 2007 book, *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed The World*, is well-written and dives into the psychology of the four men (Mao, Zhou, Kissinger, and Nixon) central to the Shanghai Communiqué produced in 1972.



Research focused on U.S.-China educational exchange in academia has been largely split into three categories: statistical analyses and reports, cultural or sociological studies of Chinese students, or historical studies of specific generations or periods. The first typically provides little context but offers occasionally startling figures. Tsinghua University's *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years* (1954) was ordered due to the hundredth anniversary of Yung Wing's graduation from Yale University, and consists mostly of numbers of students in the United States as well as their chosen universities and fields. David Zweig offers slightly more context, including brief snippets from interviews, in his analysis of the brain drain from China in the 1990s in *China's Brain Drain to the United States: Students and Scholars in the 1990s* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1995). The latest statistical report issued by the IIE entitled *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: Perspectives on a Growing Partnership* (N.Y.: AIFS Foundation and Institute of International Education, 2008) contains up-to-date statistics and several journal articles written by professors and researches with interests in U.S.-China educational exchange.

Cultural studies of Chinese students "encountering" America seem primarily the domain of Chinese authors, and entirely in the last decade. Ye Weili, Ting Ni, Qian Ning, Li Hongshan (among which only Qian operates in China primarily) focus their research on sociological examples that parallel the history of Chinese students abroad, typically in specific periods once again. Ye Weili provides thematic discussion of Chinese student life in America during the late 1800s through the 1920s in *Seeking Modernity in China's Name* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). Ting Ni's *The Cultural Experiences of Chinese Students Who Studied in the United States During the 1930s-1940s* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002) was most useful in this narrative for its historical data on the educational exchange movement during the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. Qian Ning's work in *Chinese Students Encounter America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002) provides information on the re-opening of

educational exchange after normalization in 1979 and through the 1990s. However, given that the book is written by a communist who still resides in China – the book was translated to English from the Chinese – very little mention is made of Tiananmen Square in 1989. Li Hongshan's treatment of students during the second generation deals more with politics and sociology than a straight historical study, but Li's *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008) is the most recent historical study of educational exchange.

American interest in the subject of U.S. educational exchange ignited during World War II, when Americans viewed China as a crucial ally against the Japanese. Consequently, one of the most celebrated works written during this period, Thomas LaFargue's *China's First Hundred* (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1942), deals more with the perceived western-influenced advancement of China's infrastructure and military after the Chinese Educational Mission than the experiences and diplomatic efforts of its scholars abroad. Corresponding to the collapse of relations between the mainland and the United States, there is almost a complete void of literature discussing this topic between 1949 and 1979. Finally, in the late 1980s, a few articles and Leo A. Orleans' *Chinese Students in America: Policies, Issues, and Numbers* (National Academies Press, 1988) were published; these texts dealt more with government and sociology than with an understanding of the historical context of educational exchanges and so were of little use to the general narrative. A 1987 reprinting of LaFargue's book once again offered a view of the Chinese crawling back to the West after a prolonged period in the dark.

Historian Stacey Bieler laid considerable groundwork for Li Hongshan's most recent work with her book, *"Patriots" Or "traitors"?: A History of American Educated Chinese Students* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003). She covers the entirety of the first generation in her prologue. Her epilogue then wanders between a discussion of the evolution of the 'Chinese

M.I.T.', Tsinghua University, and the various issues faced by modern Chinese students. Bieler devotes the majority of the book to the period from the turn of the century to 1949, but this investigation of the second generation is by far the most thorough and useful of any of the several listed.

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